



**ASSISTING WITH READING FLUENCY
IN THE CLASSROOM**



Assisting with Reading Fluency in the Classroom

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Academy Introduction

The purpose of this Academy is to provide the paraeducator with the information and skills needed to assist classroom teachers in meeting the literacy needs of a variety of students. It deals with the specific area of reading fluency. It prepares paraeducators to understand important fluency concepts and terms, and to use a variety of research-based instructional techniques that improve fluency at the word, phrase, sentence, and connected text levels.



Module A

Instructor's Guide



Assisting with Reading Fluency in the Classroom

Module A: Examining Scientifically Based Reading Research and the Fluency Connection



A. Energizer

Provide introductions of yourself and class members as appropriate. Distribute the **Energizer: Oral Reading Research** handout (H1) and ask participants to help you conduct some important research about their personal experiences with oral reading. Use the energizer to discuss participants' experiences with oral reading and how they impact their work with children who are learning to read.

H1

Energizer: Oral Reading Research

Talk to people in this room and find someone who fits each of the descriptions below. Using a name only once, write it on the appropriate line. When you finish, help others get theirs filled out until everyone has finished.

Descriptions:

1. Had a favorite book, story, or poem that you read over and over when you were a child.
2. Had a favorite book, story, or poem that a parent, grandparent or other adult read to you over and over.
3. As an adult, has read a book, story, or poem out loud over and over to a child.
4. Likes to read out loud to children.
5. Likes to listen to books on tape.
6. Likes to read for a while before going to sleep at night.
7. Is really good at reading with expression and sounding natural when reading aloud.
8. Hates to read out loud.
9. Likes to read interesting articles from magazines or newspapers to other adults.
10. Likes to act out or dramatize while reading out loud..



***Note to Instructor:** At the outset of the class, encourage all participants to use a binder to organize their handouts and notes. This may include providing a 3-hole punch for use during class or printing handouts on 3-hole paper. Be prepared to occasionally review the progress of participants' binders.

Consistently remind participants that they will probably not be able to remember everything that they are exposed to during the class. In this Academy, the handouts are presented as outlines of the content on which participants may want to write notes. Point out that if they take notes on their handouts and save them in an organized binder, they will be able to easily access information for further reference as needed. **Explain to participants that they will be taking an assessment at the end of the class. The assessment will be an "open-book" test.** Therefore, the more organized and accessible their notebooks are, and the better notes they take, the greater the likelihood that they will do well on the test.



In addition ... In this Academy, we have included a copy of the content of transparencies and handouts in the instructor's guide text. Sometimes the copies are exact replicas of the transparency or handout. In other cases, we have limited the size by approximating the information.



B. Lecture: Academy Goals

Using the **Overview of Assisting with Fluency in the Classroom** transparency and handout (T1/H2), review the goals of the Academy.

H2

Overview of Assisting with Fluency in the Classroom

Module A: Scientifically Based Research on Fluency

The paraeducator will:

1. Define *fluency* and terms related to fluency
2. Describe "scientifically based reading research"
3. Contrast the characteristics of fluent and non-fluent readers

Module B: Effects of Practice

The paraeducator will:

1. Describe the effect of practice on willingness to read
2. Explain automaticity and accuracy
3. Calculate the relative difficulty of a reading passage

Module C: Instructional Strategies to Enhance Fluency

The paraeducator will demonstrate:

1. The components of prosody
2. Guiding principles of fluency instruction
3. Speed drills for fluency at the word level
4. Phrase-cued instruction for fluency at the phrase level

Module D: Instructional Strategies for Connected Text Fluency

1. The paraeducator will demonstrate:
2. Problems with round-robin reading technique
3. Paired reading
4. Buddy reading
5. Choral reading
6. Reader's theater



Goal 1: Define fluency and terms related to fluency.



1.1 Activity: A Survey of Fluency Terms

Participants examine their current knowledge base regarding fluency.



Steps: 1.1.1

Use the **A Survey of Fluency Terms** transparency and handout (T2/H3).

H3

A Survey of Fluency Terms

1. (Fluency) is the ability to read words quickly with accuracy and expression.
2. (Accuracy), with regard to fluency, is the ability to read words correctly.
3. (Automaticity) is quick and accurate recognition of letters and words.
4. (Grade-level texts) are texts that have been evaluated to establish text difficulty and grade appropriateness.
5. (Reading level) gives information to teachers about how accurately a student can read a text. Reading levels are designated as independent, instructional and frustrational.
6. (Independent level) is the level at which a student reads with no more than one error in 20 words, with good comprehension.
7. (Instructional level) is the level at which a student reads with no more than one error in 10 words, with satisfactory comprehension.
8. (Prosody) is the appropriate use of intonation and phrasing, or reading with expression.
9. (Rate) is the speed at which text is read.
10. (WCPM) stands for the number of words a student reads correctly per minute; it is used to determine a student's fluency score.
 - Accuracy
 - Automaticity
 - Fluency
 - Grade-level texts
 - Independent level
 - Instructional level
 - Prosody
 - Rate
 - Reading level
 - WCPM



Explain to participants that they will be taking a short test that will be used as a personal baseline for how much information and knowledge they have about fluency. The test will not be graded, but is intended to help the attendees and the instructor have a better picture of the overall knowledge base of the class. After everybody has completed the test:

- Review the answers and take a poll to reveal the most frequently missed questions and the questions commonly answered accurately.
- Remind participants to keep their surveys to compare later on how much they knew prior to the Academy and how much they know at the end



1.2 Lecture: Fluency Definition and Facts

Use the **Fluency – A Definition** transparency and handout (T3/H4).

Despite the increased interest in reading fluency in recent years, there is still no single agreed-upon definition for fluency, as illustrated in the following examples. Some definitions stress the role of accuracy and automaticity in word recognition (LaBerge & Samuels, 1947; Samuels, 2002; Stanovich, 1991). In the *Literacy Dictionary*, fluency is defined as “freedom

from word recognition problems that might hinder comprehension” (Harris & Hodges, 1995, p. 85). Meyer and Felton (1999) define fluency as the ability to read text “rapidly, smoothly, effortlessly, and automatically with little conscious attention to the mechanics of reading, such as decoding” (p. 284). Yet

others stress the importance of appropriate use of prosody, or spoken language features that make oral reading expressive (Allington, 1983; Dowhower, 1987; Schreiber, 1987).

T3/H4

Fluency – A Definition

Fluency is the ability to read:

- smoothly
- easily
- readily
- accurately
- quickly
- with freedom from word recognition problems

Fluency

- is necessary for good comprehension and enjoyable reading
- sounds natural when reading aloud

The definition of fluency offered by the National Reading Panel (2000) combines several of these definitions, taking into consideration the components of rapid and automatic word recognition and of prosody. According to the Panel, fluency is “the ability to read a text quickly, accurately, and with proper expression” (p. 3-1). Expanding this definition, *Put Reading First* (Armbruster, Lehr, & Osborn, 2001) states that:

Fluency is the ability to read a text accurately and quickly. When fluent readers read silently, they recognize words automatically. They group words quickly in ways that help them gain meaning from what they read. Fluent readers read aloud effortlessly and with expression. Their reading sounds natural, as if they are speaking. (p. 22)



While these definitions may clarify what fluency consists of, they do not explain *why* the components of word recognition and prosody are so important to the development of fluency.

It may be helpful during this lecture to demonstrate how one reads fluently. Short excerpts from books on tape read by the authors could be used, or the instructor might read orally from a favorite story, poem, or book. Discuss how fluent reading sounds.



Goal 2: Name two initiatives associated with the term “scientifically based reading research.”



2.1 Lecture: Examining Scientifically Based Reading Research

Use the **Scientifically Based Reading Research (SBRR)** transparency and handout (T4/H5).

How many times have you heard someone say, “I really don’t enjoy reading that much?” Upon further inquiry into why someone does not enjoy reading, you hear something like, “Well, I’m not a very fast reader so it’s just not really fun for me. It takes me a long time to get through what others seem to read quickly.” A person making a statement like that may be lacking reading fluency.

According to Samuels (1979), a lack of reading fluency is characterized by a slow, halting pace; frequent mistakes; poor phrasing; and inadequate intonation. These characteristics describe a reader who has poor or weak word recognition skills.

T4/H5

Scientifically Based Reading Research (SBRR)

- Put Reading First Initiative
- National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP)

Scientifically Based Reading Research (SBRR)

Put Reading First Initiative

The Partnership for Reading, a group supported by the National Institute for Literacy, the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD) and the U.S. Department of Education, has supported and supplied much of the research and information behind the national Put Reading First Initiative. Armbruster, Behr, and Osborn (2001) have the following to say about reading fluency instruction:



Fluency is the ability to read a text accurately and quickly. When fluent readers read silently, they recognize words automatically. They group words quickly in ways that help them gain meaning from what they read. Fluent readers read aloud effortlessly and with expression. Their reading sounds natural, as if they are speaking. (p. 22)

In contrast, readers who have not yet developed fluency read slowly, word by word. Their oral reading is choppy and plodding.

According to the Put Reading First Initiative, again supported by the National Institute for Literacy, the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development and the U.S. Department of Education, scientifically based reading research has shown that several approaches are successful for improving reading fluency. Module B of this Academy will present skills and activities to be used in classrooms with students who need assistance in this area.

The National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP)

A large study conducted recently by the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) revealed that 44% of a representative sample of the nation's fourth-grade readers demonstrated low fluency. The study showed a close relationship between fluency and reading comprehension by pointing out that the students who scored low on assessments of reading fluency also scored low on assessments measuring their reading comprehension. Just being able to quickly read words in isolation, such as from a list or on flashcards, does not mean that students are automatically able to fluently read those same words or assign them appropriate meaning when they encounter the words in connected text or sentences.



Goal 3: Contrast the characteristics of fluent readers with those of non-fluent readers.



3.1 Lecture

For this lecture, use the transparencies **Characteristics of Fluent Readers (T5)** and **A Lack of Reading Fluency (T6)** as well as handouts **H4** (the section called "A Lack of Reading Fluency") and **Characteristics of Fluent Readers vs. Not-So-Fluent Readers (H6)**.

The ability to recognize letters or letter clusters and rapidly name those letters and clusters is vitally important to being a fluent reader. This is one of the areas of assistance that paraeducators are frequently expected to assist students with in classrooms.

You may want to use the story about Mrs. Oshiro (page 15) taken from the publication *A Focus on Fluency* reproduced here with permission of Pacific Resources for Education and Learning (PREL).

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A Focus on Fluency is the first in the Research-Based Practices in Early Reading series published by the Regional Educational Laboratory at Pacific Resources for Education and Learning. The booklet is an excellent source from which much of the background information for these lectures comes. Copies may be downloaded free of charge www.prel.org/programs/rel/rel.asp.

Mrs. Oshiro

It's the beginning of the school year, and Mrs. Oshiro wants to know how fluently her 2nd graders read. One by one, she sits with students and listens carefully as each child reads aloud a passage quickly from a story the class has already read and discussed. The first student, Kendra, reads the passage quickly and, it seems, effortlessly. She reads each word correctly. She pauses briefly after commas and at the ends of sentences. She reads with expression, as if she is talking. After the reading, Mrs. Oshiro asks Kendra a few questions to make sure she has understood what she read.

Mrs. Oshiro next sits with Samantha to read the passage. Unlike Kendra, Samantha struggles with the reading. She reads the passage in a slow and labored fashion. She stumbles over the pronunciation of some words, reads some words twice, skips others altogether, and occasionally substitutes different words for the words in the story. Although she pauses before pronouncing many of the words, she doesn't pause at commas and periods. When Mrs. Oshiro tells her to stop reading, Samantha sighs in relief.

Mrs. Oshiro faces a task that confronts most teachers: how to support students such as Samantha in becoming fluent readers. While instruction over the year needs to encompass aspects of reading such as phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary development, and comprehension, work to build fluency is especially important for struggling readers. Consequences can be dire for students who fail to become fluent readers: Students who do not develop reading fluency, regardless of how bright they are, are likely to remain poor readers throughout their lives (National Reading Panel, 2000).

Fluency is frequently neglected in reading instruction; for example, until recently, most commercially published reading programs did not specifically include fluency instruction. This lack of instructional focus may help explain one of the findings of the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) (Pinnell et al., 1995): Forty-four percent of American fourth-grade students cannot read fluently, even when they read grade-level stories aloud under supportive testing conditions.



3.2 Discussion

Take a poll of the participants, asking the following:

“Have you ever had the experience of working with a student or students having difficulty remembering the names of letters or how clusters of letters sound when most of the other students in the classroom seem to have no difficulty in this area?”

Then ask:

“How are these students typically doing in reading compared to the students around them?”

Allow time for class members to respond to these questions and relate their own experiences in classrooms.

T5

Characteristics of Fluent Readers

Fluent readers:

- rely primarily on the letters in the words rather than on context or pictures to identify familiar and unfamiliar words
- process virtually every letter
- use letter-sound correspondences to identify words
- have a reliable strategy for decoding words
- read words a sufficient number of times for them to become automatic (Hasbrouck, 1998)

1. Good readers process every letter in the words they read – and they do so rapidly. They are able to associate every letter or cluster of letters with the corresponding sound(s). *Phonological process skills* refer to the reader’s ability to find a relationship linking the individual sounds they hear with letter representations. Good readers have a set of phonological processing skills that they use very quickly when they need to decode new or unfamiliar words.

Many class members may already have completed the Academy “Assisting with Phonemic Awareness and Phonics in the Classroom,” which covers this material more fully. For further information, refer participants that Academy.

There are many things that fluent readers do that not-so-fluent readers fail to do. The current state of the art in reading research suggests that if we teach poor readers to do the same things that fluent readers do, the performance of poor readers will improve. For example, associating the letters in words with their corresponding sound(s), and other related phonological process skills, is characteristic of more successful readers. If we teach less proficient readers to do the same, their reading fluency is likely to improve.



3.3 Activity: Comparing Fluent and Not-So-Fluent Readers

Participants will examine the features of successful and unsuccessful readers.



3.3.1 Steps

- Divide the class into small groups of 3-4.
- Refer to the points about what fluent readers do (**T5/H6**).

H6

Characteristics of Fluent vs. Not-So-Fluent Readers

Fluent readers:

- rely primarily on the letters in the words rather than on context or pictures to identify familiar and unfamiliar words
- process virtually every letter
- use letter-sound correspondences to identify words
- have a reliable strategy for decoding words
- read words a sufficient number of times for them to become automatic (Hasbrouck, 1998)

Not-so-fluent readers:

- have a slow, halting pace, word-by-word reading
- tend to have poor comprehension
- make frequent mistakes
- use poor phrasing
- tend not to enjoy reading
- may have poor or weak word recognition skills
- have choppy and plodding oral reading skills

- Ask each group to designate someone to take notes and for everybody to be ready to share their discussion and examples with the rest of the class.
- Make the handout and transparency **Not-So-Fluent Readers (H7/T7)** available for the class to view when proceeding with the activity.
- Direct the groups to discuss and list their responses to the following questions regarding each of the bulleted items on **H7**.

“What does it look like when a student cannot or does not? (repeat for each bullet point under successful readers section of handout)

This would be another good time to ask participants to provide examples or stories of students they have known.

T6

Lack of Reading Fluency

Lack of reading fluency is characterized by:

- a slow, halting pace, word by word
- possible poor comprehension
- frequent mistakes
- poor phrasing
- possible lack of enjoyment of reading
- poor or weak word recognition skills
- choppy and plodding oral reading skills
- inadequate intonation



Example: “What does it look like when a student cannot or does not rely primarily on the letters in the word rather than on a context or pictures?”

Possible answers:

- ▲ When the student gets to a word he doesn’t know, he begins to look at the pictures or refer to other parts of the book that he has read so far to figure out the word.
- ▲ The student may have the skills to sound out the word, but fails to use them, starting to look for other clues instead.
- ▲ The student may guess at the word because of the context or because of the first letter she sees and then try to go on.
- As the class proceeds with the activity, rotate through the groups. You may need to provide clarification of some of the points regarding the skills of successful readers.
- After the groups have discussed all the points, reconvene as a large group to debrief the activity.
- On the transparency **Not-So-Fluent Readers (T7)**, record the responses of each group as you facilitate the discussion.
- Allow time for class members to thoroughly discuss the points brought up by each group.
- Remind class members that their ability to notice when a student is not using the skills that other students seem to have is critical for being able to assist students in the classroom. Participants must be able to point out the skills and abilities of successful readers before they can begin to provide assistance to students who are not successful.

Possible answers to the variations of the question “What does it look like when a student cannot or does not ...” are listed below.

- ... rely primarily on the letters in the words to identify familiar and unfamiliar words?

Possible answers:

- ▲ begins to look at the pictures or refer to other parts of the book read so far to figure out the word;
- ▲ fail to use skills to sound out the word and start to look for other clues;
- ▲ guess at the word because of the context or because of the first letter the student sees and then tries to proceed.

- ... fail to process every letter?

Possible answers:

- ▲ fail to notice the last letters in words that add meaning to the word, like plural endings; example, “girls” instead of “girl;”
- ▲ make mistakes like mistaking “big” for “dig;”
- ▲ change the meaning or mistake the meaning because they didn’t notice each letter.

- ... fail to use letter-sound correspondences to identify words?

Possible answers:



- ▲ make guesses from context or previous learning;
 - ▲ stall and don't respond, losing comprehension;
 - ▲ make reversal errors.
- ... have a reliable strategy for decoding words?
Possible answers:
 - ▲ make guesses;
 - ▲ use the first letter of the word as a cue and respond with a list of all of the words the student know that begin with that letter;
 - ▲ begin to look for pictures or context clues;
 - ▲ hope that someone else says the word.
 - ... read words a sufficient number of times for the words to become automatic?
Possible answers:
 - ▲ struggle so much that the student doesn't get adequate practice time;
 - ▲ have to go on with other parts of the classroom curriculum instead of being able to return to the areas where the student needs more practice.

H7/T7

Not-So-Fluent Readers

What does it look like when a student cannot or does not ...

- *rely primarily on the letters in the words rather than on context or pictures to identify familiar and unfamiliar words?*
 - ▲
 - ▲
 - ▲
- *process virtually every letter?*
 - ▲
 - ▲
 - ▲
- *use letter-sound correspondences to identify words?*
 - ▲
 - ▲
 - ▲
- *have a reliable strategy for decoding words?*
 - ▲
 - ▲
 - ▲
- *read words a sufficient number of times for them to become automatic?*
 - ▲
 - ▲
 - ▲



Module A

Handouts



Energizer: Oral Reading Research

Talk to people in this room and find someone who fits each of the descriptions below. Using a name only once, write it on the appropriate line. When you finish, help others get theirs filled out until everyone has finished.

Descriptions:

1. Had a favorite book, story, or poem that you read over and over when you were a child.

2. Had a favorite book, story, or poem that a parent, grandparent or other adult read to you over and over. _____
3. As an adult, has read a book, story, or poem out loud over and over to a child.

4. Likes to read out loud to children. _____
5. Likes to listen to books on tape. _____
6. Likes to read for a while before going to sleep at night. _____
7. Is really good at reading with expression and sounding natural when reading aloud.

8. Hates to read out loud. _____
9. Likes to read interesting articles from magazines or newspapers to other adults.

10. Likes to act out or dramatize while reading out loud. _____



Overview of Assisting with Fluency in the Classroom

Module A: Scientifically Based Research on Fluency

The paraeducator will:

1. Define *fluency* and terms related to fluency
2. Describe “scientifically based reading research”
3. Contrast the characteristics of fluent and non-fluent readers

Module B: Effects of Practice

The paraeducator will:

1. Describe the effect of practice on willingness to read
2. Explain automaticity and accuracy
3. Calculate the relative difficulty of a reading passage

Module C: Instructional Strategies to Enhance Fluency

The paraeducator will demonstrate:

1. The components of prosody
2. Guiding principles of fluency instruction
3. Speed drills for fluency at the word level
4. Phrase-cued instruction for fluency at the phrase level

Module D: Instructional Strategies for Connected Text Fluency

The paraeducator will demonstrate:

1. Problems with round-robin reading technique
2. Paired reading
3. Buddy reading
4. Choral reading
5. Reader’s theater



A Survey of Fluency Terms

1. _____ is the ability to read words quickly with accuracy and expression.
 2. _____, with regard to fluency, is the ability to read words correctly.
 3. _____ is quick and accurate recognition of letters and words.
 4. _____ are texts that have been evaluated to establish text difficulty and grade appropriateness.
 5. _____ gives information to teachers about how accurately a student can read a text. Reading levels are designated as *independent*, *instructional* and *frustrational*.
 6. _____ is the level at which a student reads with no more than one error in 20 words, with good comprehension.
 7. _____ is the level at which a student reads with no more than one error in 10 words, with satisfactory comprehension.
 8. _____ is the appropriate use of intonation and phrasing, or reading with expression.
 9. _____ is the speed at which text is read.
 10. _____ stands for the number of words a student reads correctly per minute; it is used to determine a student's fluency score.
- Accuracy
 - Automaticity
 - Fluency
 - Grade-level texts
 - Independent level
 - Instructional level
 - Prosody
 - Rate
 - Reading level
 - WCPM



Fluency – A Definition

Fluency is the ability to read:

- smoothly
- easily
- readily
- accurately
- quickly
- with freedom from word recognition problems

Fluency

- is necessary for good comprehension and enjoyable reading
- sounds natural when reading aloud



Characteristics of Fluent vs. Not-So-Fluent Readers

Fluent readers:

- rely primarily on the letters in the words rather than on context or pictures to identify familiar and unfamiliar words
- process virtually every letter
- use letter-sound correspondences to identify words
- have a reliable strategy for decoding words
- read words a sufficient number of times for them to become automatic
(Hasbrouck, 1998)

Not-so-fluent readers:

- have a slow, halting pace, word-by-word reading
- tend to have poor comprehension
- make frequent mistakes
- use poor phrasing
- tend not to enjoy reading
- may have poor or weak word recognition skills
- have choppy and plodding oral reading skills



Not-So-Fluent Readers

What does it look like when a student cannot or does not ...

- *rely primarily on the letters in the words rather than on context or pictures to identify familiar and unfamiliar words?*

▲
▲
▲
▲
▲
▲
▲

- *process virtually every letter?*

▲
▲
▲
▲
▲
▲
▲

- *use letter-sound correspondences to identify words?*

▲
▲
▲
▲
▲
▲
▲

- *have a reliable strategy for decoding words?*

▲
▲
▲
▲
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- *read words a sufficient number of times for them to become automatic?*

▲
▲
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Module A

Transparencies



Overview of Assisting with Fluency

Module A: Examining Scientifically Based Reading Research

The paraeducator will:

1. Define *fluency* and terms related to fluency
2. Describe “scientifically based reading research”
3. Contrast the characteristics of fluent and non-fluent readers

Module B: Effects of Practice

The paraeducator will:

1. Describe the effect of practice on willingness to read
2. Explain automaticity and accuracy
3. Calculate the relative difficulty of a reading passage

Module C: Instructional Strategies to Enhance Fluency

The paraeducator will demonstrate:

1. The components of Prosody
2. Guiding principles of fluency instruction
3. Speed drills for fluency at the word level
4. Phrase-cued instruction for fluency at the phrase level

Module D: Instructional Strategies for Connected Text Fluency

1. The paraeducator will demonstrate:
 2. Problems with round-robin reading technique
 3. Paired reading
 4. Buddy reading
 5. Choral reading
 6. Reader’s theater
-



A Survey of Fluency Terms

1. _____ is the ability to read words quickly with accuracy and expression.
2. _____, with regard to fluency, is the ability to read words correctly.
3. _____ is quick and accurate recognition of letters and words.
4. _____ are texts that have been evaluated to establish text difficulty and grade appropriateness.
5. _____ gives information to teachers about how accurately a student can read a text. Reading levels are designated as *independent*, *instructional* and *frustrational*.
6. _____ is the level at which a student reads with no more than one error in 20 words, with good comprehension.
7. _____ is the level at which a student reads with no more than one error in 10 words, with satisfactory comprehension.
8. _____ is the appropriate use of intonation and phrasing, or reading with expression.
9. _____ is the speed at which text is read.
10. _____ stands for the number of words a student reads correctly per minute; it is used to determine a student's fluency score.

• Accuracy	• Fluency	• Grade-level texts
• Automaticity	• Independent level	• Reading level
• WCPM	• Prosody	• Rate
• Instructional level		



Fluency – Definition

Fluency is the ability to read:

- smoothly
- easily
- readily
- accurately
- with freedom from word recognition problems

Fluency:

- is necessary for good comprehension and enjoyable reading
- sounds natural when reading aloud



Scientifically Based Reading Research (SBRR)

- Put Reading First Initiative
- National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP)



Characteristics of Fluent Readers

Fluent readers:

- rely primarily on the letters in the words rather than on context or pictures to identify familiar and unfamiliar words
- process virtually every letter
- use letter-sound correspondences to identify words
- have a reliable strategy for decoding words
- read words a sufficient number of times for them to become automatic

(Hasbrouck, 1998)



Lack of Reading Fluency

Lack of reading fluency is characterized by:

- a slow, halting pace, word by word
- possible poor comprehension
- frequent mistakes
- poor phrasing
- possible lack of enjoyment of reading
- poor or weak word recognition skills
- choppy and plodding oral reading skills
- inadequate intonation



Not-So-Fluent Readers

What does it look like when a student cannot or does not ...

1. *rely primarily on the letters in the words rather than on context or pictures to identify familiar and unfamiliar words?*
 -
 -
 -
 -
2. *process virtually every letter?*
 -
 -
 -
 -
3. *use letter-sound correspondences to identify words?*
 -
 -
 -
 -
4. *have a reliable strategy for decoding words?*
 -
 -
 -
 -
5. *read words a sufficient number of times for the words to become automatic?*
 -
 -
 -
 -



Module B

Instructor's Guide



Module B: Effects of Practice



Goal 1: Describe the effect of practice on interest in reading and willingness to read.



1.1 Lecture: The Matthew Effect

Some readers fall victim to what is called “the Matthew effect” (Stanovich, 1986). This is a Biblical reference to Matthew 25:29: “unto everyone that hath shall be given ...; but from him that hath not shall be taken away even that which he hath.” Or, in more familiar terms, “the rich get richer and the poor get poorer.” As Cunningham and Stanovich (1998) explain related to reading, students who are good readers read more, get more practice, and therefore, become better readers. However, students for whom reading is unrewarding and difficult struggle try to avoid reading as best they can. As a result, these students have less exposure to and practice with text, which leads to a delay in the development of word recognition automaticity. This delay, in turn, slows comprehension development and limits vocabulary growth.

Use **The Matthew Effect** transparency and handout (T1/H1).

H1

The Matthew Effect

How the Matthew Effect works in reading:

- **Good readers:**
 - ▲ enjoy reading, feel successful with reading, *and*
 - ▲ develop more vocabulary and greater comprehension, *so*
 - ▲ they read more because they can, and thus become richer in reading because they practice more.
- **Struggling readers:**
 - ▲ have difficulty reading, *and*
 - ▲ don't enjoy it, *and*
 - ▲ practice less, *so*
 - ▲ they have less vocabulary and weaker comprehension.

The effect can be seen even more graphically using the information in the **Differences in Amounts of Independent Reading** transparency and handout (T2/H2). Taken from *Growth in Reading and How Children Spend Their Time Outside of School* by R. C. Anderson, P. T. Wilson and L. G. Fielding (1988), it shows the Matthew Effect in action for a sampling of fifth graders. Students who are successful in reading, when given the opportunity and demand for independent reading, dramatically increase the number of words they read per year. By comparison, students who are not successful in reading, and given the same opportunity and demands, depending upon their reading ability,



spend increasingly less time reading and being exposed to words and language from written text.

H2/T2 Differences in Amounts of Independent Reading		
Percentile rank of reading achievement	Minutes of book reading per day	Words read in books per year
98	65.0	4, 358,000
90	21.1	1,823,000
80	14.2	1,146,000
70	9.6	622,000
60	6.5	432,000
50	4.6	282,000
40	3.2	200,000
30	1.3	106,000
20	0.7	21,000
10	0.1	8,000
2	0.0	0

The Matthew Effect in action as seen here makes some very important points.

- A student in the 10th percentile of reading achievement reads as much in a **whole year** as the student in the 90th percentile reads in **2 days!**
- The amount a student reads independently matters – the research quoted here was based on independent and/or out-of-school reading.

Use the **Results** transparency (T3) to summarize the points made so far.

This is a self-perpetuating cycle! In order to break the cycle, we must assess where instruction is needed and teach in a focused manner. Just having students do more oral reading is generally not enough. They may need increased skills and mastery of sound, word and phrase work before more oral reading practice alone can be beneficial.

T3

Results

Remember:

**lack of fluency =
a lack of motivation =
less practice reading =
fewer words read =
a smaller vocabulary =
*limited comprehension***



Fluency is very important. A reader who is not fluent is not a good reader. Most reading researchers agree that reading fluency is necessary for good comprehension and enjoyable reading. In our culture, reading is frequently seen as a pleasant leisure activity; indeed, many people refer to it as one of their favorite hobbies. If it was difficult and the reader did not comprehend what he or she was reading, it wouldn't be entertainment. Not surprisingly, therefore, for most adults, if a book is too difficult, they are unlikely to finish reading it. And if they persist and do finish it, they usually indicate that the book was very difficult for them and that they would not like or enjoy reading another of equal difficulty.



1.2 Activity

Class participants will take a look at their personal experience with the components of reading.

Fluency makes a difference in a student's interest in reading and willingness to read, but a student's skill development is also influenced by the relative difficulty of the material he or she is trying to read. If the student is reading materials that are too difficult, he or she may not comprehend enough to continue. While materials that are easy may be more fun to read, and are appropriate for fluency practice, easy materials do not expand or extend students' vocabulary or provide opportunities to improve their phonemic awareness.

Finding the right balance here is challenging. If the paraeducator is able to quickly determine the instructional level of a given reading material, he or she can ensure students are working with material at an appropriate level.



1.2.1 Steps

- Assign participants to groups of 3.
- Direct participants to spend about 3-4 minutes in each group discussing how their own levels of vocabulary knowledge and ability to decode unfamiliar words affect their ability to read directions or material for classes, their interest in reading for entertainment, or their interest in reading for other purposes. Ask them to discuss how they handle unfamiliar vocabulary when they are reading, and whether it depends on what they read. Ask them to discuss their feelings about taking tests and to explore what effect their test-taking feelings have to their reading ability.
- Use the **Connections Between Vocabulary, Comprehension, Phonemic Awareness and Fluency** handout (H3) to debrief the small-group discussions, emphasizing how fluency is interrelated with many other aspects of reading.



H3

Connections Between Vocabulary, Comprehension, Phonemic Awareness and Fluency

- Fluency provides a link or bridge between word recognition and reading comprehension.
- Fluent readers are able to focus their attention on the meaning of the text because they do not have to spend much time decoding the text. This allows them time to make connections related to themselves, the text itself and the world.
- Fluent readers are able to make their reading personal, bringing their own life experiences and knowledge to the reading experience.
- Fluent readers recognize words and comprehend their meaning at the same time.
- When less fluent readers have to spend time figuring out the words they are reading, they do not have time to pay attention to the meaning of the text and make personal connections.
- There is a high correlation between the ability to read fluently with comprehension and scoring well on tests.



1.3 Lecture: Independent Silent Reading in the Classroom and Fluency Development

When working with struggling readers, the challenge is to find additional opportunities for meaningful reading practice. To meet this challenge, teachers have long been encouraged to promote independent silent reading in the classroom by using procedures such as free-time reading, voluntary reading, Sustained Silent Reading, Uninterrupted Sustained Silent Reading and Drop Everything and Read. Further, businesses and schools create schoolwide incentive programs (such as pizza parties, free books, and class celebrations) as ways to reward students for reading a large number of books.

The reasoning behind such efforts is sound. As mentioned, numerous studies have found a strong relationship between reading ability and how much a student reads:

- Biemiller (1977-19978) found significant differences in print exposure among readers with different levels of reading ability, and reported substantial ability group differences related to the amount of reading done.
- Juel (1988) found that first-grade children with good word recognition skills were exposed to almost twice as many words in their basal readers as were children who had poor word recognition skills.
- Taylor, Pearson, Clark, and Walpole (1999) found that teachers in high-achieving primary classes allotted more time for independent reading than their peers in less achieving classes.



- Nagy and Anderson (1984) found that in fifth grade, good readers may read 10 times as many words as poor readers over a school year.
- Cunningham and Stanovich (1998) showed strong connections between extensive reading, reading achievement and vocabulary knowledge.

Although the connection between reading about many subjects and reading success appears to be obvious, research has rarely focused directly on whether efforts to encourage students to engage in independent silent reading with minimal guidance or feedback improve reading achievement and fluency. Most of the evidence cited to support independent silent reading comes from correlational rather than experimental research (National Reading Panel, 2000).

Correlational findings are useful, but they pose a problem. Correlations do not show the direction or the sequence of a cause-effect relationship. For example, they cannot show whether good readers are good because they read more or whether they simply choose to read more because they are good readers. *Experimental* research, on the other hand, offers strict controls over variables that can affect an outcome and, therefore, yields more informative and useful results. Contrary to expectations, of the few experimental studies on the effects of independent reading, most have found small or no gains in reading achievement as a result of such classroom activity (Carver & Liebert, 1995; Holt & O'Tuel, 1989; Volland, Topping, & Evans, 1999).

Researchers offer several explanations for why time spent in silent reading in the classroom seems to produce such small gains in reading achievement. One explanation is that some teachers want independent reading time to be just that – a time for students to choose their own selections to read for pleasure. They do not want the time to be viewed as “school work.” The problem with this approach is that unless students are held responsible for what they read, some may spend independent reading time daydreaming, talking or engaging in other off-task activities (Kuhn & Stahl, 2003). Further, when students read silently, there is no way for teachers to evaluate the rate, accuracy and prosody of their reading; thus, there is no opportunity for the teachers to provide constructive feedback (Shanahan, 2002). Finally, such use of independent silent reading relies on students' ability to improve their reading on their own – and most struggling readers do not have this ability.

Another explanation for the general ineffectiveness of classroom silent reading for struggling readers is that, left on their own, many students tend to choose reading materials for the wrong reasons. For example, some choose materials that are very easy and consequently receive little practice reading challenging materials that build vocabulary and comprehension (Kuhn & Stahl, 2003). Other poor readers choose books that are far too difficult for them for appearance sake so others can see what a hard book they have. These students cannot read such books, either silently or orally, but because there is no accountability in this system, they are allowed to keep up the pretense.



Because of the lack of experimental research evidence, the National Reading Panel (2000) did not endorse independent silent reading in the classroom as a way to build fluency. However, neither did it reject the practice. Independent silent reading serves many functions in school programs, including the development of independent reading habits. Further, the Panel called for more experimental research designed to examine the role of independent silent reading in fluency development. In short, the Panel's findings showed that, on its own, time spent in silent reading in the classroom is not likely to increase reading fluency for students who need the most help. Indeed, for these students, silent independent reading can take away time from needed reading instruction.

The fact remains that struggling readers are unlikely to make reading gains unless teachers find ways to encourage them to read more on their own, both inside and outside of school. Indeed, research about the out-of-school reading habits of students has shown that even 15 minutes a day of independent reading can expose students to more than a million words of text in a year (Anderson, Wilson, & Fielding, 1988).



1.4 Discussion

Encourage participants to ask themselves what they, as paraeducators, can do to make independent reading time more productive for fluency development among their students. Anderson (1990) suggests the following three steps:

1. Help students select books at appropriate reading levels and related to their interests. Make book selection a part of the regular reading group activity. *Ask participants to describe whether they currently do this and how they go about it. Preview the upcoming material on how to determine the readability level of material for a particular student (in Goal 3 of this module).*
2. After silent reading, set aside time for students to discuss what they read. Have students recommend books to each other. *Discuss how paraeducators might be able to assist with this in their situations.*
3. Involve parents and other family members by giving them tips on how to read with their children. *Discuss cautions paraeducators should observe when making suggestions to parents about reading with children. Discuss the kinds of questions paraeducators would want to ask the teacher prior to engaging in this kind of conversation with parents.*



Goal 2: Explain how automaticity and accuracy affect reading fluency.



2.1 Lecture: Defining Automaticity

What are the factors and skills regarding fluency that can be impacted by support in the classroom? Several critical concepts and skills have been mentioned previously that we need to examine and understand as we examine this question. Use the **Factors Related to Literacy and Defining Automaticity** transparency and handout (T4/H4).

**H4****Factors Related to Fluency**

- Word recognition – the ability to recognize words when concepts have been taught
- Automaticity – rapid, effortless and unconscious word recognition
- Reading comprehension – understanding passages read
- Accuracy – reading words correctly, whether through decoding or sight-word recognition

Defining Automaticity

Students who read with automaticity:

- can read with no noticeable cognitive or mental effort
- have mastered word recognition to the point of overlearning
- do not require conscious attention to the fundamental skills
- simultaneously decode and comprehend a passage they have read or listened to
- pace their reading rate depending on the structure of the text they are reading
- read text orally using appropriate phrasing and expression

Accurate and Automatic Word Recognition in Fluent, Meaningful Reading

Examining the role of automatic information processing in reading, researchers in the early 1970s focused first on word recognition (LaBerge & Samuels, 1974). They found that we can devote only a limited amount of attention to any given cognitive task and that attention we devote to one task is attention we cannot give to another. In reading, at least two cognitive tasks – word recognition and comprehension – compete for the reader's attention. The more attention readers must give to identifying words, the less attention they have left to give to comprehension (Foorman & Mehta, 2002; LaBerge & Samuels, 1974; Samuels, 2002).

Fluency serves as a bridge between word recognition and comprehension. Because fluent readers are able to identify words accurately and automatically, they can focus most of their attention on comprehension. That is, they can make connections among the ideas in the text and between the text and their personal background knowledge. In other words, fluent readers can recognize words and comprehend at the same time. Less fluent readers, on the other hand, must focus much of their attention on word recognition. Because they cannot consistently identify words rapidly, they may read word by word, sometimes repeating or skipping words. They often group words in ways that they would not do in their everyday speaking, making their reading sound choppy (Dowhower, 1987). Because they must expend energy/attention in all these areas, the result is that non-fluent readers have little attention left to devote to comprehension (National Reading Panel, 2000).



Fluency develops gradually and requires extensive practice (Biemiller, 1977-1978). In addition, a reader's level of fluency varies according to what he or she is reading and how familiar he or she is with that material. Even very skilled adult readers may have difficulty reading fluently when called on to read materials with highly technical vocabulary and/or about subjects about which they have little background knowledge, such as medical textbook descriptions of surgical procedures (Armbruster et al., 2001).

A high level of automaticity and accuracy allows readers to spend their time comprehending the passages read rather than attempting to decode the words being read. In short, automaticity is a critical skill.

What do we really mean by automaticity?

When we do something automatically, we do it without conscious attention as illustrated in the following examples.

1. Driving a standard transmission car – shifting gears. When we are first learning to drive, it takes all of our mental energy to coordinate our feet and hands. But eventually we learn to do it without even being aware that we are doing it, with all parts working together at the same time – vision, hearing, feet, hands, etc.
2. When playing a sport – at first we feel awkward every time we line up to hit a golf ball or dive off the diving board. But with practice, we reach a point where we automatically line our body up to perform the skill – whether it's shooting baskets, catching a ball, pitching a ball or passing a baton in a relay race.
3. Similarly, in knitting or crocheting – at first we must think about how we are holding our hands, holding the needles or hook, and position the yarn for every stitch. But eventually we can do it while watching television, rarely thinking about the details of the stitches.
4. Playing an instrument – while taking lessons and practicing individual pieces we think we will never be accomplished and then we may find that we are able to play with enjoyment, listening to and enjoying the music rather than having to read every note in order to be able to play.

The same principles are true for students who read with automaticity. Students who read with automaticity:

- can read with no noticeable cognitive or mental effort
- have mastered word-recognition skills to the point of “overlearning”
- do not have to expend conscious attention with the fundamental skills
- simultaneously decode and comprehend a passage that they read or listen to
- pace their reading rate depending on the structure of the text they are reading
- read text orally using appropriate phrasing and expression

When students do not have automaticity with most of the words of a passage or text, their reading comprehension is negatively affected. They do not have adequate or accurate comprehension.



2.2 Activity: Reading Unfamiliar Text

Participants will interact with a passage of unfamiliar text and reflect upon the similarities between this activity and the experience of students reading unfamiliar texts.



2.2.1 Steps

- Use the **Reading Unfamiliar Text** transparency (T5).
- Place the transparency on the projector and wait until everyone is paying attention before turning on the light. Ask participants to read the passage orally (but quietly) to themselves as though practicing to read it in a small group.
- Ask participants to write down, in their own words, a one- or two-sentence summary of what the passage means.
- After they have read the passage and have had a few minutes to write a summary, use the **Translation** transparency (T6). Allow class members time to read the translation.
- Next, ask them to divide into groups of 3-4 and discuss the following questions. Use the **Debriefing: Reading Unfamiliar Text** transparency (T7).
- After discussing the questions on the transparency, ask participants to return to their seats for an individual activity. Use the **Reflections: “This Is Really Hard”** handout (H5).
- Ask participants to take about 5 minutes to reflect upon their learning and to think about how they will apply that learning to students they may be working with using the following guided reflection.

T5

Reading Unfamiliar Text

The doctrine of “res ipsa loquitur” is inapposite, and the appellee’s reliance thereon is misplaced and disingenuous.

T6

Translation

The doctrine of “res ipsa loquitur” assumes that a person must be to blame because it couldn’t be anyone else, it doesn’t fit these facts, and the person using this argument is wrong and insincere.

T7

Debriefing: Reading Unfamiliar Text

1. Did you know all the words in the passage? Was your reading automatic?
2. Did you know how to pronounce all the words?
3. Did you hesitate trying to make meaning of the reading? If “yes,” why?
4. Would you have been tense about reading the text to others in your group? If “yes,” why?
5. Would you have been sure of yourself when reading it? If “no,” why?



H5

Reflections: “This Is Really Hard”

Think about how you felt when reading the passage from a legal document. Think about your possible struggle to decode and pronounce the words. Think about the lack of comprehension you may have experienced, even after you got the Translation document. Now, think about students you are working with who are having difficulty with decoding and comprehension across their school day. Write about your thinking.

If needed, use the following questions to help guide your thinking and writing.

- Can you identify with these students?
- If so, how do you think this could help you assist them better?
- Do you think you need to know more to be a better paraeducator?
- What kinds of things do you think you might need to have greater knowledge of?

- Reconvene as a large group and review each other’s responses. Use the **Reflections: “This is Really Hard”** transparency (T8) to list reflective responses that individuals are willing to share from their personal reflections.

T8

Reflections: “This Is Really Hard”

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***Note to Instructor:** As you list the reflections, take note of those that indicate the need for further learning and the areas of learning. Keep the list and check off those that are addressed as you proceed through the Academy. If some areas are not addressed, you may want to tell the individual participant where to begin to investigate further learning in the particular area.



2.3 Lecture: Automaticity and Working Memory

Most people who participate in this kind of activity find that they are unable to read the legal passage fluently or to fully comprehend it. They generally are not able to reach a high level of **automaticity** in reading the individual words or phrases in the passage. They may even struggle with **decoding**. (Decoding refers to the process of changing printed words to spoken words. This generally occurs when the reader maps a sound onto each letter or spelling pattern in the words. It can also occur when the reader applies sight-word recognition, structural analysis, and context clues [Blevins, 2001]). Even so, they probably have



more success with decoding than with comprehending the passage. If they would have been tested on the meaning of the passage immediately following the reading, most class members would have failed the test, even though they had “read” the material.

Current research is helping us understand the underlying processes that occur in a student’s brain as they attempt to achieve fluency. These findings are also helping us understand what is interfering with those processes.

Throughout our lives, in our daily pursuits, we use what we refer to as “working memory.” Use the **Working Memory** transparency (T9).

Working memory is a brain activity that involves several parts of the brain as we attempt to make sense of and remember new information and link it to what we already know. What is important about working memory and how children become fluent readers is the following:

T9

Working Memory

Working memory is a process occurring in the brain that

- stores short-term information while we are using it, and
- recalls memories from long-term storage by thinking about how the information relates to our current situation.

- When a student is struggling with a processing task, that task is taking up much of the student’s working memory, or the thinking space in his brain.
- As the processing task become automatic, it takes up less working memory, leaving more cognitive space in the brain to apply to the task of comprehending what is being read.
- When the task is practiced enough for it to become **automatic**, there is enough available memory to allow the student to fluently engage in the complex process of reading.

For example:

1. If a student cannot easily recognize the differences between the letter “b” and the letter “d,” the student must think about which letter she is seeing.
2. The student then has to ask herself, “Which comes first, the stick or the ball?”
3. When a student has to go through that kind of a process, even to get the right answer on the smallest component of the reading process, she has used her working memory for figuring out a low-level foundational skill and may not have enough memory left for the comprehension part of the reading. In addition, she may have significantly slowed down the reading rate.

So, what do we do to increase a student’s level of automaticity? We provide the opportunity for **overlearning**. We briefly discussed this earlier when we talked about how we prepare to become good at a sport, sewing or playing an instrument.

Overlearning is the key to automaticity. In order to reach the level of automaticity, a student must have enough opportunities to practice so that he masters the skill. Once the skill



has been mastered, it will no longer take conscious thought or attention to complete it, and will allow the cognitive or thinking space in the brain to be spent on comprehension.

While overlearning is a common concept in the fields of sports or music, it is relatively new in the area of literacy. That is, historically, we have been afraid that if we make students practice a concept until they have mastered it, we might bore them and they might consequently not want to read. We now understand that, to the contrary, practice makes for a greater skill, which will lead to greater motivation to read. No one wants to do something if they know they will fail. Likewise, no one wants to do things that are consistently difficult or that consistently lead to discouragement or embarrassment.

In other words, educators now understand that overlearning can be a powerful concept in literacy that yields great benefits for students, especially in the area of fluency and text comprehension. However, to help a student overlearn material for the purposes of fluency, the student must practice material that is at an appropriate level. To determine the appropriateness of reading materials for a particular student, paraeducators can use the technique of calculating WCPM – or the number of words a student can accurately (correctly) read per minute. *This technique does not assess the student. It assesses the appropriateness of the reading material for the student.*



Goal 3: Calculate the relative difficulty of a reading passage for a particular reader.



3.1 Activity: Calculating Words Correct Per Minute (WCPM)

Participants will calculate WCPM and determine the level of difficulty of a reading passage for a particular student.

Explain that, as reviewed in the previous lecture, when students have the opportunity to overlearn skills and respond to known words and phrases with automaticity, they increase their level of comprehension. Accuracy is critically important for overlearning. If students practice on materials that are too difficult, they will become frustrated and will not learn effectively. By contrast, when students overlearn material that is easy or just moderately difficult, they gain skill.

The following activity will be completed as partners and will take approximately an hour or more of class time to complete. Before starting the activity, be sure that everyone has access to a watch or a clock with a sweep hand.



3.1.1 Steps

- Divide the class into pairs. The pairs determine which of them will be the “paraeducator” and which will be the “student.”
- Give each designated “paraeducator” a copy of the **Paraeducator Copy** handout (**H6**).



H6

Paraeducator Copy

Directions:

- Tell your “student” when to begin to read aloud and time him/her for exactly 1 minute.
- Follow along on this copy, circling all words read incorrectly.
- Do not correct the student while he or she is reading or indicate whether the person is reading correctly or not.
- After 1 minute, place a slash mark (/) after the last word the student read when you called “time.”

Paraeducator Reading Passage*

They moved up the twenty-mile inlet with the dusk deepening into dark,	13
the raindrops glistening, falling slowly in the search light, an occasional fish	24
darting through the white, spumy wake off the bow. And they came at last to	39
the government float, a third of a mile from the inlet’s end and three and	54
one-half miles from the village Kingcome. They tied up on the inside of the	68
float where the boat could not roll.	75
“In the morning how will we manage?”	82
“In the morning we will lower the speed boat and I will go first with	97
your gear and food. I will return with boys from the village and two of the	113
thirty-foot canoes, and they will help load the organ and take it to the village.	129
“Up the river?”	132
“Yes. On the cliffs before you reach the river, you will see paintings	145
of cattle, sheep, goats and coppers that mark the gifts given in a great tribal	160
potlatch. There were so many that, put end to end, it is said that they would have	176
reached from the village three miles down inlet.”	184
“The paintings are very old?”	189
“Less than thirty years. The potlatch was in 1936.”	197

*excerpt from Craven, M. (1973). *I heard the owl call my name*.
Reprinted with permission.

Comprehension Questions

Directions:

- Remove the student’s copy of the passage and ask the following questions.
- Indicate correct answers with a + (plus) and incorrect with a – (minus).

Questions

- (inferential) 1. What was the weather condition? (answer: light rain was falling) _____
- (literal) 2. What were they going to try to move? and where were they taking it? _____
(answer: an organ and to the village) (if either part of the answer is incorrect, give an incorrect score; both must be correct to receive a correct score)
- (literal) 3. In what were the village boys going to ride? _____ (answer: two 30-foot canoes)
- (literal) 4. How was the cargo going to be moved? _____ (answer: by the village boys)
- (inferential) 5. One character was worried, what was the worry about? _____ (answer: how would they manage to move the organ)

Scoring:

Complete the following:

Oral Reading Fluency

Comprehension

_____ WCPM _____ % of accuracy _____ % correct (comprehension)

Compute the results as follows:

WCPM: determine the total number of words read and subtract the number of incorrect words from that total. This number is the student’s WCPM. Do not subtract words that the student may have added that are not in the paraeducator’s text. Adding words merely takes more time and is already adjusted for.

% of accuracy or word recognition: divide the total number of words in the passage into the words read correctly. This will reveal the percentage of accuracy or word recognition in the student reading.

% correct (comprehension): there are five questions, so each question is worth 20%.



- Give each designated “student” a copy of the **Student Copy** handout (H7).

H7

Student Copy

Directions:

- Work with a partner who will play the role of the paraeducator.
- You will read the student version. Read it exactly as written; do not try to make corrections (it is designed to have mistakes).
- The “paraeducator” will indicate when you are to begin to read the passage aloud. Read until the paraeducator tells you to stop and then wait for further instructions.

“Student” Reading Passage

They moved up the twenty-mile inn with the dusk deepening into dark, the raindrops gliding falling slowly in the searchlight, an octopus and fish daring through the white, spot wake off the bow. And they came at last to the gophers flat, a third of a mile from the inn’s end and three and one-half miles from the villain’s Kingdom. They tried up on the island of the float where the bat could not roll.

“In the morning who will we manage?”

“In the morning we will lower the spin bottle and I will go first with your gun and food. I will return with boys from the villain and two of the thirty-foot canes, and they will help and the oats and take it to the villain.

“Up the river?”

“Yes. On the cliffs before you reach the river, you will see photos of cattle, sheep, goats and cops that mark the gifts given in a great tribal potluck. There were so many that, put end to end, it is said they would have reached from the villain’s three mile island.

“The paintings are very old?”

“Less than thirty years. The potluck was in 1936.”

- Give the “paraeducators” time to review their handout, while the “students” leave their handouts face down on the table.
- Complete the activity as a class, each pair proceeding one step at a time as the instructor directs them to continue.

Give the following directions (orally) to the pairs, one step at a time, waiting for pairs to finish the step before continuing on to the next.

1. Tell them to read the directions at the top of their handouts for the beginning of the activity.
2. The “paraeducators” then ask the “students” to read the student handout aloud. They time the student for 1 minute of read-aloud time. They must use a watch or a clock with a sweep hand, being prepared to record student errors while keeping track of time. (Explain that in a real situation the student would not know what the teacher would be doing and would typically only be interested in reading.) Explain to the group that, to make the point of this activity, the paraeducator version and the student version are different from one another. The paraeducator’s version is accurate whereas the student version includes prerecorded errors. The students should be careful to read



their version as it is printed so that the paraeducator will have the opportunity to record their errors.

3. After the students have read their handout aloud, the paraeducator removes the copy.
4. The paraeducator then asks the student the comprehension questions listed at the bottom of the paraeducator's handout. Each answer is scored as + (plus) for a correct response or – (minus) for an error.
5. After completing the comprehension questions, the pair switches roles – the paraeducator becomes the student and vice versa. They begin the activity again, with the student reading and the paraeducator timing and making note of errors. This gives each member of the pair an opportunity to experience how to record the errors. They do not need to complete the comprehension question portion of the assessment the second time around.
6. At this point, the paraeducator and the student can work together for the rest of the activity. Explain that under normal circumstances a student would not participate in the scoring process but for the sake of learning how to do this, the person acting as the student has now been relieved of the student role.
7. The pairs proceed with establishing a reading level, based on the errors made by the student while reading for one minute.
8. They begin this process by calculating the WCPM, or “Words Correct Per Minute.” They take note that the “paraeducator” version of the passage has the number of words per line. The pair must determine the total number of words read and subtract the number of incorrect words from that total. This number is the student's WCPM. Do not subtract words that the student may have added that are not in the teacher's text. Adding words merely takes more time and is already adjusted for.
9. After the pair has determined the total number of words read correctly, they divide the total number of words in the passage into the number of words read correctly. The result will reveal the percent of accuracy or word recognition in the student's reading. The instructor may want to have a calculator available for this part of the activity because of the long division necessary.
10. Next, look at the number of questions the student answered correctly and determine the percentage of comprehension. There are five questions so each question is worth 20%. Remind students that the level of comprehension may be influenced by the fact that an adult did the reading and may have been able to infer meaning that a student may have been able to infer.



11. After completing all three parts, WCPM, accuracy/word recognition and comprehension, fill in the table.
12. Using the table provided, establish the student's reading level. Was the passage at the student's independent, instructional or frustration level?
13. Ask class members to volunteer to discuss their student and their observations.



3.2 Optional Activity: Practice Calculating Accuracy



3.2.1 Steps

- Use the **Practice Calculating Accuracy** transparency (T10) to give students several opportunities to practice calculating accuracy.
- Show the problems one at a time and allow students to do the calculations, share answers and discuss the process until you are sure they can do the calculations easily.

T10

Practice Calculating Accuracy

- Student A reads a total of 87 words in one minute and makes 12 errors. Calculate the WCPM and accuracy.
- Student B reads a total of 153 words in one minute and makes 5 errors. WCPM? Accuracy?
- Student C reads a total of 119 words in one minute and makes 8 errors. WCPM? Accuracy?
- Student D reads a total of 92 words and makes 11 errors. WCPM? Accuracy?



3.3 Lecture: Level of Difficulty

As the graph on the **Passage Accuracy and Comprehension** handout (H8) illustrated, individual students have varied skills in being able to read fluently, depending upon the text they are reading.

When the paraeducator helps to match the relative difficulty of reading material to a student's ability, he or she increases the likelihood that the

H8/T11 Passage Accuracy and Comprehension		
Level of Difficulty	Word-Recognition Accuracy	Comprehension
Independent	95% or higher	90% or higher
Instructional	85% or higher (grades 1-2) below 90% (grades 3-12)	75% or higher
Frustration	below 85% (grades 1-2) below 90% (grades 3-12)	below 50%



student can practice on materials that are at an appropriate level of difficulty and, therefore, learn better. Use the **What Students Should Read** transparency and handout (T12/H9) to discuss how levels of difficulty can be matched to specific reading purposes.

T12/H9 What Students Should Read		
Independent-level text	Instructional-level text	Frustration-level text
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Relatively easy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Challenging but manageable 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Difficult text
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No more than 1 in 20 words difficult for the reader 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No more than 1 in 10 words difficult for the reader 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> More than 1 in 10 words difficult for the reader
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 95% success 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 90%-94% success 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Less than 90% success



3.4 Activity

Participants will reflect on what they have learned and how they can apply it to their own students.

Direct the class to use the **Reflections: Accuracy (H10)** handout and record their personal learning regarding accuracy and comprehension.

Give the following directions: After completing the activity to establish WCPM, accuracy and comprehension, please take a few minutes to think about what you have learned from this activity that you can apply to students you work with. Think about a situation where a student cannot read a word correctly and guesses at the word with another real word instead of decoding the actual word. What is sacrificed when a student does this? How accurate is comprehension in such a case? How can you see yourself being helpful in such a circumstance?

H10

Reflections: Accuracy

After completing the activity to establish WCPM, accuracy and comprehension, please take a few minutes to think about what you have learned from this activity that you can apply to students you work with. Think about a situation where a student cannot read a word correctly and guesses at the word with another real word instead of decoding the actual word.

What is sacrificed when a student does this? How accurate is comprehension in such a case? How can you see yourself being helpful in such a circumstance?



Module B

Handouts



The Matthew Effect

How the Matthew Effect works in reading:

Good readers:

- enjoy reading, feel successful with reading, *and*
- develop more vocabulary and greater comprehension, *so*
- they read more because they can, and thus become richer in reading because they practice more.

Struggling readers:

- have difficulty reading, *and*
- don't enjoy it, *and*
- practice less, *so*
- they have less vocabulary and weaker comprehension.



Differences in Amounts of Independent Reading

Percentile rank of reading achievement	Minutes of book reading per day	Words read in books per year
98	65.0	4, 358,000
90	21.1	1,823,000
80	14.2	1,146,000
70	9.6	622,000
60	6.5	432,000
50	4.6	282,000
40	3.2	200,000
30	1.3	106,000
20	0.7	21,000
10	0.1	8,000
2	0.0	0



Connections Between Vocabulary, Comprehension, Phonemic Awareness and Fluency

- Fluency provides a link or bridge between word recognition and reading comprehension.
- Fluent readers are able to focus their attention on the meaning of the text because they do not have to spend much time decoding the text. This allows them time to make connections related to themselves, the text itself and the world.
- Fluent readers are able to make their reading personal, bringing their own life experiences and knowledge to the reading experience.
- Fluent readers recognize words and comprehend their meaning at the same time.
- When less fluent readers have to spend time figuring out the words they are reading, they do not have time to pay attention to the meaning of the text and make personal connections.
- There is a high correlation between the ability to read fluently with comprehension and scoring well on tests.



Factors Related to Fluency

- Word recognition – the ability to recognize words when concepts have been taught
- Automaticity – rapid, effortless and unconscious word recognition
- Reading comprehension – understanding passages read
- Accuracy – reading words correctly, whether through decoding or sight-word recognition

Defining Automaticity

Students who read with automaticity:

- can read with no noticeable cognitive or mental effort
- have mastered word recognition to the point of overlearning
- do not require conscious attention to the fundamental skills
- simultaneously decode and comprehend a passage they have read or listened to
- pace their reading rate depending on the structure of the text they are reading
- read text orally using appropriate phrasing and expression



Reflections: “This Is Really Hard”

Think about how you felt when reading the passage from a legal document. Think about your possible struggle to decode and pronounce the words. Think about the lack of comprehension you may have experienced, even after you got the Translation document. Now, think about students you are working with who are having difficulty with decoding and comprehension across their school day. Write about your thinking.

If needed, use the following questions to help guide your thinking and writing.

- Can you identify with these students?
- If so, how do you think this could help you assist them better?
- Do you think you need to know more to be a better paraeducator?
- What kinds of things do you think you might need to have greater knowledge of?



Paraeducator Copy

Directions:

- Tell your “student” when to begin to read aloud and time him/her for exactly 1 minute.
- Follow along on this copy, circling all words read incorrectly.
- Do not correct the student while he or she is reading or indicate whether the person is reading correctly or not.
- After 1 minute, place a slash mark (/) after the last word the student read when you called “time.”

Paraeducator Reading Passage*

They moved up the twenty-mile inlet with the dusk deepening into dark,	13
the raindrops glistening, falling slowly in the search light, an occasional fish	24
darting through the white, spumy wake off the bow. And they came at last to	39
the government float, a third of a mile from the inlet’s end and three and	54
one-half miles from the village Kingcome. They tied up on the inside of the	68
float where the boat could not roll.	75
“In the morning how will we manage?”	82
“In the morning we will lower the speed boat and I will go first with	97
your gear and food. I will return with boys from the village and two of the	113
thirty-foot canoes, and they will help load the organ and take it to the village.	129
“Up the river?”	132
“Yes. On the cliffs before you reach the river, you will see paintings	145
of cattle, sheep, goats and coppers that mark the gifts given in a great tribal	160
potlatch. There were so many that, put end to end, it is said that they would have	176
reached from the village three miles down inlet.”	184
“The paintings are very old?”	189
“Less than thirty years. The potlatch was in 1936.”	197

*excerpt from Craven, M. (1973). *I heard the owl call my name*.
Reprinted with permission.



Comprehension Questions

Directions:

- Remove the student's copy of the passage and ask the following questions.
- Indicate correct answers with a + (plus) and incorrect with a – (minus).

Questions

- (inferential) 1. What was the weather condition? (answer: light rain was falling) _____
- (literal) 2. What were they going to try to move? and where were they taking it? _____
(answer: an organ and to the village) (if either part of the answer is incorrect give an incorrect score; both must be correct to receive a correct score)
- (literal) 3. In what were the village boys going to ride? _____
(answer: two 30-foot canoes)
- (literal) 4. How was the cargo going to be moved? _____
(answer: by the village boys)
- (inferential) 5. One character was worried, what was the worry about? _____
(answer: how would they manage to move the organ)

Scoring:

Complete the following:

Oral Reading Fluency

Comprehension

_____ WCPM _____ % of accuracy _____ % correct (comprehension)

Compute the results as follows:

WCPM: determine the total number of words read and subtract the number of incorrect words from that total. This number is the student's WCPM. Do not subtract words that the student may have added that are not in the paraeducator's text. Adding words merely takes more time and is already adjusted for.

% of accuracy or word recognition: divide the total number of words in the passage into the words read correctly. This will reveal the percentage of accuracy or word recognition in the student reading.

% correct (comprehension): there are five questions, so each question is worth 20%.



Student Copy

Directions:

- Work with a partner who will play the role of the paraeducator.
- You will read the student version. Read it exactly as written; do not try to make corrections (it is designed to have mistakes).
- The “paraeducator” will indicate when you are to begin to read the passage aloud. Read until the paraeducator tells you to stop and then wait for further instructions.

“Student” Reading Passage

They moved up the twenty-mile inn with the duck deepening into dark, the rain-drops gliding falling slowly in the searchlight, an octopus and fish daring through the white, spot wake off the bow. And they came at last to the gophers flat, a third of a mile from the inn’s end and three and one-half miles from the villain’s Kingdom.

They tried up on the island of the float where the bat could not roll.

“In the morning who will we manage?”

“In the morning we will lower the spin bottle and I will go first with your gun and food. I will return with boys from the villain and two of the thirty-foot canes, and they will help and the oats and take it to the villain.

“Up the river?”

“Yes. On the cliffs before you reach the river, you will see photos of cattle, sheep, goats and cops that mark the gifts given in a great tribal potluck. There were so many that, put end to end, it is said they would have reached from the villain’s three mile island.

“The paintings are very old?”

“Less than thirty years. The potluck was in 1936.”



Passage Accuracy and Comprehension

Level of Difficulty	Word-Recognition Accuracy	Comprehension
Independent	95% or higher	90% or higher
Instructional	85% or higher (grades 1-2) below 90% (grades 3-12)	75% or higher
Frustration	below 85% (grades 1-2) below 90% (grades 3-12)	below 50%



What Students Should Read

Independent-level text	Instructional-level text	Frustration-level text
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Relatively easy• No more than 1 in 20 words difficult for the reader• 95% success	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Challenging but manageable• No more than 1 in 10 words difficult for the reader• 90%-94% success	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Difficult text• More than 1 in 10 words difficult for the reader• Less than 90% success



Reflections: Accuracy

After completing the activity to establish WCPM, accuracy and comprehension, please take a few minutes to think about what you have learned from this activity that you can apply to students you work with. Think about a situation where a student cannot read a word correctly and guesses at the word with another real word instead of decoding the actual word.

What is sacrificed when a student does this? How accurate is comprehension in such a case? How can you see yourself being helpful in such a circumstance?



Module B

Transparencies



The Matthew Effect

Good readers:

- enjoy reading, feel successful with reading, *and*
- develop more vocabulary and greater comprehension, *so*
- they read more because they can and thus become richer in reading because they practice more.

Struggling readers:

- have difficulty reading, *and*
- don't enjoy it, *and*
- practice less, *so*
- they have less vocabulary and weaker comprehension.



Differences in Amounts of Independent Reading

Percentile rank	Minutes of reading/day	Words read in books/year
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60	6.5	432,000
50	4.6	282,000
40	3.2	200,000
30	1.3	106,000
20	0.7	21,000
10	0.1	8,000
2	0.0	0



Results

Remember:

lack of fluency =

a lack of motivation =

less practice reading =

fewer words read =

a smaller vocabulary =

limited comprehension



Factors Related to Fluency

- word recognition
- automaticity
- reading comprehension
- accuracy

Defining Automaticity

Students who read with automaticity:

- read with no effort
- have mastered word recognition to the point of overlearning
- do not require conscious attention to the fundamental skills
- simultaneously decode and comprehend
- pace their reading rate depending on the text structure
- read text orally using appropriate phrasing and expression



Reading Unfamiliar Text

The doctrine of “res ipsa loquitor” is inapposite, and the appellee’s reliance thereon is misplaced and disingenuous.



Translation

The doctrine of “res ipsa loquitor” assumes that a person must be to blame because it couldn’t be anyone else, it doesn’t fit these facts, and the person using this argument is wrong and insincere.



Debriefing: Reading Unfamiliar Text

1. Did you know all the words in the passage? Was your reading automatic?
2. Did you know how to pronounce all the words?
3. Did you hesitate trying to make meaning of the reading? If “yes,” why?
4. Would you have been tense about reading the text to others in your group? If “yes,” why?
5. Would you have been sure of yourself when reading it? If “no,” why?



Reflections: “This Is Really Hard”



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Working Memory

Working memory is a process occurring in the brain that

- stores short-term information while we are using it, and
- recalls memories from long-term storage by thinking about how the information relates to our current situation.



Practice Calculating Accuracy

- Student A reads a total of 87 words in one minute and makes 12 errors. Calculate the WCPM and accuracy.
- Student B reads a total of 153 words in one minute and makes 5 errors. WCPS? Accuracy?
- Student C reads a total of 119 words in one minute and makes 8 errors. WCPM? Accuracy?
- Student D reads a total of 92 words and makes 11 errors. WCPM? Accuracy?



Passage Accuracy and Comprehension

Level of Difficulty	Word-Recognition Accuracy	Comprehension
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What Students Should Read

Independent-level text	Instructional-level text	Frustration-level text
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Module C

Instructor's Guide



Module C: Instructional Strategies to Enhance Fluency



A. Energizer: Fluency Firsts

If an energizer is necessary before beginning this module, divide participants into groups of 3 or 4 and ask members of each group to tell what fluency “aha! moments” they have experienced since the last class. Otherwise, skip the energizer or use it at a time when the group seems to need a quick pick-me-up.



Goal 1: Explain the components of prosody.



1.1 Lecture: Prosody

Throughout this module terms such as “reads with expression,” “sounds as though they are naturally speaking” or “uses intonation and correct phrasing” have been used. All of these expressions are definitions of the word “prosody.” Use the **Prosody** handout and transparency (**T1/H1**).

Prosody is a combination of spoken language features that include stress or emphasis, pitch variations, intonation, reading rate and pausing (Dowhower, 1987; Schreiber 1987). Prosodic reading reflects an understanding of meaningful phrasing and syntax; that is, the ways words are organized in sentences and passages) (Rasinski, 2000). It also reflects the reading cues provided by text features such as punctuation marks and headings, as well as the use of different sizes and kinds of type; for example, boldface or all capitals (Chafe, 1988).

The relationship between prosody and reading success has not been clearly established. However, just as the prosodic features help young children to understand and interpret spoken language – the messages conveyed through raised or lowered voices, emphasized words, and sentences spoken rapidly or slowly – these features also seem to help children get meaning from written language (Schreiber, 1987). For example, fluent readers understand that punctuation marks can tell them where and how long to pause and what kind of intonation to

T1/H1

Prosody

Features in spoken language that include:

- stress
- emphasis
- pitch variations
- intonation
- reading rate
- pausing

To read with appropriate prosody also means:

- The reader understands how to use meaningful phrases and syntax.
- The reader recognizes the ways that words are organized into sentences and passages.
- The reader is able to use reading cues found within the text such as
 - ▲ punctuation marks
 - ▲ headings
 - ▲ different sizes and kinds of type such as boldface print or all capitals.



use to read a sentence. They also understand that text features, such as words in boldface or all capitals, can tell them where to place emphasis. They then use this information, rapidly and often without conscious attention, to construct meaning as they read (National Reading Panel, 2000).

In other words, these are all skills and qualities that make it pleasant to listen to someone while they are reading aloud. When any of those qualities are missing, the reader is not fluent.

Using the features just mentioned when reading helps young children understand and interpret spoken language. These features also help students get meaning from written language. The punctuation used in a written text gives great meaning to the reader. Therefore, teaching students the meaning and use of punctuation both for silent reading and reading aloud is critical to their reading comprehension as well as their fluency. Prosody can and should be modeled throughout a school day.

The following example shows how a paraeducator might model prosody for students.

Paraeducator:

(Reads a line from a story): “The city mouse should have been excited to find the cheese, but he wasn’t.” Did you hear how I grouped the words “The city mouse should have been excited to find the cheese,”? That’s because the words go together. And then I paused a little before I read the words “but he wasn’t.” This comma *(points to the comma)* told me to do that.

(Reads another line): “It’s the scariest day of my life! The country mouse cried.” Did you hear how my voice got louder and more excited right here? That’s because the author put in this exclamation mark *(points to the exclamation mark)* to show how the country mouse said the words.

Prosody in Fluent Reading

On some reading assessments, elements of prosody are used to distinguish fluent from less fluent reading. For example, the four levels of NAEP’s (The National Assessment of Educational Progress) oral reading fluency scale distinguish word-by-word reading from reading that shows awareness of larger, meaningful phrase groups, syntax, and expressive interpretation (Pinnell et al., 1995). Although paraeducators should never be asked to perform reading assessments or to identify students’ reading level, it is helpful to be aware that a level system exists.

NAEP’S Integrated Reading Performance Record Oral Reading Fluency Scale

Level 4

Reads primarily in large, meaningful phrase groups. Although some regressions, repetitions, and deviations from text may be present, these do not appear to detract from the overall structure of the story. Preservation of the author’s syntax is consistent. Some or most of the story is read with expressive interpretation.



Level 3

Reads primarily in three- or four-word phrase groups. Some smaller groupings may be present. However, the majority of phrasing seems appropriate and preserves the syntax of the author. Little or no expressive interpretation is present.

Level 2

Reads primarily in two-word phrases with some three- or four-word groupings. Some word-by-word reading may be present. Word groupings may seem awkward and unrelated to the larger context of sentence or passage.

Level 1

Reads primarily word-by-word. Occasional two- or three-word phrases may occur, but these are infrequent and/or they do not preserve meaningful syntax.

Note. From *Listening to Children Read Aloud* (p. 15), by U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, 1995 Washington, DC: Author. Available at: <http://nces.ed.gov/pubs95/web/95762.asp>



Goal 2: Know the guiding principles of fluency instruction.



2.1 Lecture: Guiding Principles of Fluency Instruction

Modules A and B of this Academy provided a great deal of information about definitions of various aspects of reading fluency. This module will provide paraeducators with the opportunity to practice skills that will help their students develop fluency.

Once a student has been assessed by a teacher or a reading specialist, it is time to begin delivering the appropriate instruction – the instruction that will give the student enough practice to improve his or her reading fluency.

Use the transparency and handout **The Guiding Principles of Fluency Instruction (T2/H2)**.

The Guiding Principles of Fluency Instruction

1. Focus on a student's oral reading. In order to do this meaningfully, the material the student is reading must be at her independent or instructional reading level. If the reading is at a frus-

T2/H2

The Guiding Principles of Fluency Instruction

1. Focus on the student's oral reading.
2. Give appropriate corrective feedback.
3. Make fluency one part of a comprehensive reading program.
4. Use text at the appropriate level.
5. Use short pieces of text, no more than 200 words.
6. Give the student multiple opportunities to practice.
7. Have students reread familiar text.
8. Provide a variety of reading materials, including stories, nonfiction and poetry.
9. Track improvement.
10. Provide fluency practice approximately 15 minutes or more daily.



trational level, the student will not have the skills necessary to practice reading with the appropriate prosody. She will be struggling to decode and will not be able to focus on prosody.

2. A focus on oral reading should only be one part of a comprehensive reading program. That is, reading with fluency is only part of reading instruction. The target of fluency is increased reading comprehension, but other components of reading instruction such as phonemic awareness, phonics and vocabulary are also necessary for fluency and comprehension. It is important to realize that there is a scope and sequence to fluency instruction just as there is for phonemic awareness and phonics. This scope and sequence can guide instructional decisions and increase the effectiveness of fluency instruction and practice. Use the transparency and handout **The Scope and Sequence of Fluency Instruction (T3/H3)**.

When a student is having problems at the text-reading level, you may need to back down and work at the phoneme level, the word level, the sentence level or the phrase level to address the fluency issue.

T3/H3

The Scope and Sequence of Fluency Instruction

The scope and sequence begins with **automaticity** in each of these areas:

- sounds
- letters
- words
- phrases
- sentences
- text reading with fluency and comprehension

Although rereading text passages is a common strategy used to improve fluency, it may not solve problems with fluency because it may not be addressing the underlying cause of the problem. For example, if a student is unfamiliar with certain sounds, letters or words, he may be unable to read phrases or sentences containing those elements at the independent or instructional level. This is the primary reason why fluency cannot be taught in isolation but must be addressed as part of a comprehensive reading/literacy program.

3. Give appropriate corrective feedback to help improve performance. Use **An Oral Reading Feedback Technique** handout (H4) to elaborate on this point. What does “appropriate corrective feedback” mean? The technique, adapted from the work of Anderson, Hiebert, Scott, and Wilkinson (1985), has been found to be very effective. While it is not complicated, it sometimes takes a little practice to be able to use it effortlessly. The procedure has been used with similar effects when teachers led choral reading with small groups or even classes of students, as Rasinski, Padak, Linek, and Sturtevant (1994) have shown.
4. Make sure the text used for fluency instruction is at the student’s independent or instructional level. A classroom teacher or reading/literacy specialist may provide a grade-level text or may specify either the independent- or instructional-level material specific to a particular series or set of reading materials. If no reading material is provided or no assessment information is available from the teacher, the paraeducator



may use the technique for assessing the independent, instructional, or frustration level of difficulty of reading materials taught in Module B of this Academy. After the student's reading level has been determined, the paraeducator may assist the student in reading passages that are of appropriate levels of difficulty to increase fluency.

5. Use short pieces of text, no more than 200 words. The idea is to provide opportunity for practice and not to fatigue the reader, remembering that the material that the student is reading is at her independent or instructional level. Students can then focus on reading fluently rather than spending mental energy on word recognition and decoding.
6. Give the student multiple opportunities to practice. Most of us have had many opportunities to observe students enjoy rereading preferred or much-loved books. As the student becomes increasingly familiar with the written text, she is able to read more fluently and enjoy reading more, thus avoiding the Matthew Effect.
7. Have the student reread familiar text numerous times until she reaches fluency with a given passage. While assessment is done using unfamiliar text, fluency instruction uses the strategy of rereading text that the reader already knows as increased familiarity and prosody go hand in hand.
8. Provide practice opportunities that include a variety of reading materials such as stories, nonfiction and poetry. Poetry is especially well suited for fluency practice because poems for younger readers are often short and contain rhythm, rhyme and meaning, making practice easy, fun and rewarding (Put Reading First, The Partnership for Reading).

H4

An Oral Reading Feedback Technique

Use this feedback technique when a student makes an oral reading mistake that:

1. changes the meaning of a text, or
2. involves a word that should be learned.

Steps:

1. Pause for a moment to see whether the student can correct the error without help. Give plenty of wait time before saying anything to see if the student notices that something didn't sound right or didn't make sense.
2. If the student is unable to make the correction, direct the student's attention to phonemic clues about the word's pronunciation.
3. If the student is still unable to correctly say the word, direct the student's attention to contextual clues about the word's meaning.
4. When the word is correctly identified and read, ask the student to reread several times the sentence that contains the word. This helps the student to assimilate the correction and to recover the meaning of the sentence.



9. Track improvement. Most classrooms in which a teacher is concerned with fluency and reading improvement have data systems to track student growth. Teachers may keep running records of student change over time. Paraeducators working under the direction of a professional should find out what sort of data to record to track improvement. If no system for written data is available, the paraeducator may want to do something as simple as tape recording a student who is reading a passage, allowing the student to listen to himself read and then reread, aiming for greater fluency each time. It is not the job of the paraeducator to devise data systems.
10. Provide fluency practice for approximately 15 minutes or more daily. Since one of the major differences between good and poor readers is the amount of time they spend reading, it is critical to provide adequate amounts of time for oral reading practice.



2.2 Activity

Participants practice giving fluency instruction using the guiding principles presented.

For this activity, bring in three different reading passages at an adult reading level. The passages may be taken from poems, magazine articles, novels or short stories. Each passage should be about 200 words long. Make multiple copies of the reading passages so each participant has one passage and each group of 3 has three different passages.



2.2.1 Steps

- Assign participants to groups of 3.
- Assign roles to participants. One role is the “student,” one is the “paraeducator,” and one is the “observer.”
- Give the three reading passages to the group. Tell them to each select one passage, but to keep it turned upside down until it is their turn to play the student role.
- Instruct participants to start by having the person assigned to the paraeducator role give a reading passage to the person in the student role and provide fluency instruction according to the guiding principles just discussed.
- The job of the “observer” is to notice how many of the principles the “paraeducator” used during the lesson. Instruct the “observers” to use the **The Guiding Principles of Fluency Instruction** handout (H2) as a checklist. The “observer” may also want to refer to the **An Oral Reading Feedback Technique** handout (H4) to follow along and notice whether the person in the paraeducator role is using the feedback technique as described.
- The “observer” gives positive feedback on how the concepts were applied. No negative feedback or criticism is to be given.
- Switch roles twice so that everyone has the chance to play each role.



Goal 3: Demonstrate the use of speed drills for building fluency at the word level.



3.1 Lecture: Strategy, Speed Drills

Speed drills are an excellent way to work on mastery of sounds and words. These may involve a phonics pattern or they may be done with sight words. For instance, if a student is working on a short /a/ sound, you can use a list of words that include the sound and practice the words until the student has overlearned the pattern. In addition, the student may have the use of decodable texts in which she has opportunities to practice reading words that contain the short /a/.

To use speed drills:

- Select drills that represent skills the student needs.
- Use speed drills that are of appropriate length for the student's age or skill level.
- Use 20-25 words in the drill. Write the words randomly and use them multiple times so that the student has multiple times to practice the skill.
- Allow the student time to independently practice the words. This can include worksheets where the student underlines or highlights the targeted skill prior to taking a timed speed drill. For instance, the student could highlight or underline all the *ie*'s or *ee*'s in all of the long /e/ words on the worksheet (Blevins, 2001).

Fluency increases when students use speed drills because they help develop rapid recognition of common syllables and spelling patterns. Students will find speed drills to be fun if they are presented as such.

When using speed drills, students' progress should be charted in some way. Speed drills are designed to be used multiple times. They are also timed, usually for 1 minute, thus providing a way to see direct change over time.



3.2 Activity: Speed Drills

Participants will practice using several forms of speed drills that can be used with students in their classrooms.



3.2.1 Steps

Materials: one highlighter per pair of participants, one pencil per participant and the **Speed Drills 1 and 2** handout (H5)

- Divide the class into pairs.
- Ask the pairs to designate one member as the "paraeducator" and one as the "student."
- The "paraeducator" in each group should give the "student" the following directions.



H5

Speed Drills

Directions: Practice reading the words until you are ready to be timed. (This drill focuses on high-frequency words that begin with *wh* and *th*.)

Speed Drill 1 100-Word, High-Frequency Word Speed Drill

that	The	them	there	then
where	when	What	we	who
what	that	them	then	the
Where	there	who	when	we
where	them	That	the	when
who	there	we	then	What
who	when	There	that	the
where	we	them	what	then
the	we	what	there	that
where	then	When	them	who
when	then	we	the	there
that	them	who	What	where
there	where	then	them	when
who	that	what	we	The
who	them	there	What	where
Then	the	that	we	when
what	who	Them	then	the
Where	there	when	that	we
them	the	We	where	there
when	what	then	Who	that

Speed Drill 2 The 107 Most Frequently Used Words in Written English (Zeno et al., 1995)

the	at	we	many	first
of	or	what	these	new
and	from	about	no	very
to	had	up	time	my
a	I	said	been	also
in	not	out	who	down
is	have	if	like	make
that	this	some	could	now
it	but	would	has	way
was	by	so	him	each
for	were	people	how	called
you	one	them	than	did
he	all	other	two	just
on	she	more	may	after
as	when	will	only	water
are	an	into	most	through
they	their	your	its	get
with	there	which	made	because
be	her	do	over	back
such	even	much	our	must
where	see	then	know	little
his	can			



- ▲ Direct the student to review the Speed Drill 1 sheet. The “student” should highlight all the words that begin with *wh* and underline all of the words that begin with *th* – with guidance and encouragement from the participant playing the role of paraeducator.
- ▲ Direct the “student” to read the listed words after she has underlined and highlighted, practicing the words to herself.
- ▲ After a few minutes of practice, use a timer or clock with a sweep hand to time how well the “student” did on the speed drill.
- ▲ Ask the “student” to place a / mark at the last word that she read.
- ▲ Switch roles, and use Speed Drill 2 so that both partners have the opportunity to do both roles.
- ▲ In Speed Drill 2, there is no need to highlight or underline words. Go directly to the practice step.
- Debrief the activity, making sure that the following points are covered:
 - ▲ In a real classroom the students would have multiple opportunities to practice and retake the speed drill, perhaps twice or three times a week, allowing them to show growth over time.
 - ▲ Speed drills can be used for many purposes: training around syllables, magic ‘e,’ vowel teams, etc.
 - ▲ **Overlearning** is the key with speed drills. Students enjoy them because they are quick and effective.
 - ▲ Students enjoy watching their progress on their charts and become self-competitive.
 - ▲ Students should not do a speed drill for more than 3 minutes at one time, but speed drills may be conducted several times per day if the opportunity presents itself.



Goal 4: Demonstrate the use of phrase-cued reading instruction for building fluency at the phrase level.



4.1 Lecture: Strategy, Phrase Reading Instruction

Phrase reading builds a bridge between word-by-word reading and connected text reading. One of the characteristics of a fluent reader is their ability to group words together, using the phrases that naturally occur in reading. Proficient readers recognize words quickly and accurately, but they also “chunk” the words together into meaningful phrases while reading connected text. Sometimes when students are having difficulty with comprehension, they may fail to put the words they are reading into meaningful chunks, using the natural phrasing that is in the text. They may be reading word by word and not have learned how to use phrasing and chunking of the text.

One way to assist students who are struggling in this area is to provide them with text at their independent or instructional reading level that has been marked with cues for where the phrases are naturally occurring. The teacher/paraeducator models how to read the text using the markers and then gives the student the opportunity to practice reading the text.



Use **The Benefits of Phrase Reading** transparency and handout (T5/H6).

Blevins (2001) suggests that the skill of phrase reading can be taught systematically over the course of a week. To use this practice technique with students, make two copies of a text. The first copy is marked for phrases and used initially. The second unmarked copy is used by Days 4 and 5 of the practice. Blevins suggests that students read chorally as pairs or a small group, rather than solo, to practice this skill.



4.2 Activity: Phrase-Cued Reading Practice

Class members practice the skill of assisting students with phrase-cued reading.

T5/H6

The Benefits of Phrase Reading

- Phrase reading builds a bridge between word-by-word reading and reading connected text.
- Phrases carry meaning, which leads to increased reading comprehension.
- Phrase reading practice increases prosody.
- Phrase-cued reading strategies help the non-fluent reader begin to notice the phrases in the text.
- Phrase reading instruction leads to sentence reading and eventually fluent text reading.
- Phrase reading problems often have their roots in oral language. Reading aloud to a student can provide a model of oral language and make it possible for the student to concentrate on voice cues and prosody.

Materials: The instructor should provide the class with two copies each of several reading selections from different reading levels. Select passages for young readers as well as for fourth- or fifth-grade readers. Each passage should be 100-250 words in length. The instructor should choose the reading selections from their own teaching or school resource materials.



4.2.1 Steps

- Hand out two copies of each of the reading selections to each class member.
- Lead the large group as they read through the copies and discuss where the naturally occurring phrases are within each selection. Make slash marks after each of the phrases. Participants use the copies for the following activity.

For example:

All of the boys/ were playing/ on the playground.
When we got there/ we asked/ if we could play too.
“Sure, / if you want”/ one of the boys said.

OR

The most wonderful thing/ that I can think of /to write about today/ is how fun/ it is to go swimming/ on a very hot and muggy day./ I really wish/ that I were swimming/ instead of writing/ and maybe that is why it came to mind so quickly.



- Explain to the participants that if they were completing a similar activity with students in their classroom, they could use the following technique. Use the **Guidelines for Phrase-Cue Instruction** transparency and handout (T6/H7).

H7

Guidelines for Phrase-Cue Instruction

1. Choose a simple text for teaching; one that show clear phrases.
2. Either put the text in a plastic sleeve and give the student an erasable marker or make a copy of the text and guide the student to write on the paper.
3. Show the student how to mark the phrases with a slash. (Read aloud softly as you demonstrate so the student hears and sees what you are doing.)
4. As an option show the student how to make a scooping motion or line under the phrase.
5. Ask the student to read the selection using the marks made.

- Divide the class into groups of 4-5. Have each group designate who will act as the paraeducator assisting the “students” and who are going to be the “students.”
- Use the **Phrase Reading Instruction, Directions** handout (H8).
- Direct the designated “paraeducators” to follow the directions provided in the handout.
- Debrief the activity, making sure participants understand how they can apply these techniques on the job in their own classrooms.

**H8****Phrase-Reading Instruction, Directions**

1. Explain to the students that using good phrasing when reading is an important part of being a good reader and that when they use this skill they have better reading comprehension.
2. Model, asking the students to follow along as you read the selection using appropriate levels of prosody.
3. Read the selection to students two or three times.
4. Ask the students to tell what they noticed about your phrasing and expression.
5. Ask the students to use their pages of marked text (the ones that they all worked on together in the previous activity) to chorally read along with you. Encourage them to comment and discuss their reading with you and with their peers.
6. Direct the students to read aloud to each other in pairs or small groups. Ask them to give each other constructive feedback.
7. Pretend that it is Day 2 or 3 of this exercise, and ask the students to use their marked texts to again read chorally.
8. Pretend that it is Day 4 of the activity, and ask the students to use their **unmarked** texts. Give each student the opportunity to individually read the **entire** selection aloud to you (**do not use round-robin reading where the student reads only a small portion of the text**).
9. Provide individual feedback to students about their reading, rereading with them where necessary, helping them read with phrasing and expression. Use the teacher feedback technique covered earlier in this module.
10. Encourage the students to take the selection home and read it with family members and to practice it during the school day; provide them with positive feedback whenever appropriate.



Module C

Handouts



Prosody

Features in spoken language that include:

- stress
- emphasis
- pitch variations
- intonation
- reading rate
- pausing

To read with appropriate prosody also means:

- The reader understands how to use meaningful phrases and syntax.
- The reader recognizes the ways that words are organized into sentences and passages.
- The reader is able to use reading cues found within the text such as
 - ▲ punctuation marks
 - ▲ headings
 - ▲ different sizes and kinds of type such as boldface print or all capitals.



The Guiding Principles of Fluency Instruction

1. Focus on the student's oral reading.
2. Give appropriate corrective feedback.
3. Make fluency one part of a comprehensive reading program.
4. Use text at the appropriate level.
5. Use short pieces of text, no more than 200 words.
6. Give the student multiple opportunities to practice.
7. Have students reread familiar text.
8. Provide a variety of reading materials, including stories, nonfiction and poetry.
9. Track improvement.
10. Provide fluency practice approximately 15 minutes or more daily.



The Scope and Sequence of Fluency Instruction

The scope and sequence begins with **automaticity** in each of these areas:

- sounds
- letters
- words
- phrases
- sentences
- text reading with fluency
and comprehension



An Oral Reading Feedback Technique

Use this feedback technique when a student makes an oral reading mistake that:

1. changes the meaning of a text, or
2. involves a word that should be learned.

Steps:

1. Pause for a moment to see whether the student can correct the error without help. Give plenty of wait time before saying anything to see if the student notices that something didn't sound right or didn't make sense.
2. If the student is unable to make the correction, direct the student's attention to phonemic clues about the word's pronunciation.
3. If the student is still unable to correctly say the word, direct the student's attention to contextual clues about the word's meaning.
4. When the word is correctly identified and read, ask the student to reread several times the sentence that contains the word. This helps the student to assimilate the correction and to recover the meaning of the sentence.



Speed Drills

Directions: Practice reading the words until you are ready to be timed. (This drill focuses on high-frequency words that begin with *wh* and *th*.)

Speed Drill 1 100-Word, High-Frequency Word Speed Drill				
that	The	them	there	then
where	when	What	we	who
what	that	them	then	the
Where	there	who	when	we
where	them	That	the	when
who	there	we	then	What
who	when	There	that	the
where	we	them	what	then
the	we	what	there	that
where	then	When	them	who
when	then	we	the	there
that	them	who	What	where
there	where	then	them	when
who	that	what	we	The
who	them	there	What	where
Then	the	that	we	when
what	who	Them	then	the
Where	there	when	that	we
them	the	We	where	there
when	what	then	Who	that



Speed Drills (cont.)

Speed Drill 2 The 107 Most Frequently Used Words in Written English (Zeno et al., 1995)				
the	at	we	many	first
of	or	what	these	new
and	from	about	no	very
to	had	up	time	my
a	I	said	been	also
in	not	out	who	down
is	have	if	like	make
that	this	some	could	now
it	but	would	has	way
was	by	so	him	each
for	were	people	how	called
you	one	them	than	did
he	all	other	two	just
on	she	more	may	after
as	when	will	only	water
are	an	into	most	through
they	their	your	its	get
with	there	which	made	because
be	her	do	over	back
such	even	much	our	must
where	see	then	know	little
his	can			



The Benefits of Phrase Reading

- Phrase reading builds a bridge between word-by-word reading and reading connected text.
- Phrases carry meaning, which leads to increased reading comprehension.
- Phrase reading practice increases prosody.
- Phrase-cued reading strategies help the non-fluent reader begin to notice the phrases in the text.
- Phrase reading instruction leads to sentence reading and eventually fluent text reading.
- Phrase reading problems often have their roots in oral language. Reading aloud to a student can provide a model of oral language and make it possible for the student to concentrate on voice cues and prosody.



Guidelines for Phrase-Cue Instruction

1. Choose a simple text for teaching; one that show clear phrases.
2. Either put the text in a plastic sleeve and give the student an erasable marker or make a copy of the text and guide the student to write on the paper.
3. Show the student how to mark the phrases with a slash. (Read aloud softly as you demonstrate so the student hears and sees what you are doing.)
4. As an option show the student how to make a scooping motion or line under the phrase.
5. Ask the student to read the selection using the marks made.



Phrase-Reading Instruction, Directions

1. Explain to the students that using good phrasing when reading is an important part of being a good reader and that when they use this skill they have better reading comprehension.
2. Model, asking the students to follow along as you read the selection using appropriate levels of prosody.
3. Read the selection to students two or three times.
4. Ask the students to tell what they noticed about your phrasing and expression.
5. Ask the students to use their pages of marked text (the ones that they all worked on together in the previous activity) to chorally read along with you. Encourage them to comment and discuss their reading with you and with their peers.
6. Direct the students to read aloud to each other in pairs or small groups. Ask them to give each other constructive feedback.
7. Pretend that it is Day 2 or 3 of this exercise, and ask the students to use their marked texts to again read chorally.
8. Pretend that it is Day 4 of the activity, and ask the students to use their **unmarked** texts. Give each student the opportunity to individually read the **entire** selection aloud to you (**do not use round-robin reading where the student reads only a small portion of the text**).
9. Provide individual feedback to students about their reading, rereading with them where necessary, helping them read with phrasing and expression. Use the teacher feedback technique covered earlier in this module.
10. Encourage the students to take the selection home and read it with family members and to practice it during the school day; provide them with positive feedback whenever appropriate.



Module C

Transparencies



Prosody

Features in spoken language that include:

- stress
- emphasis
- pitch variations
- intonation
- reading rate
- pausing

To read with appropriate prosody also means:

- The reader understands how to use meaningful phrases and syntax.
- The reader recognizes the ways that words are organized into sentences and passages.
- The reader is able to use reading cues found within the text such as
 - ▲ punctuation marks
 - ▲ headings
 - ▲ different sizes and kinds of type such as boldface print or all capitals.



The Guiding Principles of Fluency Instruction

1. Focus on the student's oral reading.
2. Give appropriate corrective feedback.
3. Make fluency one part of a comprehensive reading program.
4. Use text at the appropriate level.
5. Use short pieces of text, < 200 words.
6. Provide multiple opportunities to practice.
7. Have students reread familiar text.
8. Provide a variety of reading materials, including stories, nonfiction and poetry.
9. Track improvement.
10. Provide fluency practice approximately 15 minutes or more daily.



The Scope and Sequence of Fluency Instruction

The scope and sequence begins with **automaticity** in each of these areas:

- sounds
- letters
- words
- phrases
- sentences
- text reading with fluency and comprehension



An Oral Reading Feedback Technique

Use when a student makes an oral reading mistake that:

1. changes the meaning, or
2. involves a word that should be a sight word and needs to be learned

Steps:

1. Wait to see whether the student can correct the error without help. Give enough time!
2. If the student is unable to self-correct, direct the student's attention to phonemic clues.
3. If the student is still unable to say the word, direct the student's attention to contextual clues.
4. When the word is correctly identified, ask the student to reread the sentence that contains the word several times to assimilate the correction and to recover the meaning of the sentence.



The Benefits of Phrase Reading

- Phrase reading acts as a bridge between word-by-word and connected text.
- Phrases carry meaning = increased reading comprehension.
- Phrase reading practice increases prosody.
- Phrase reading helps the reader notice the phrases in the text.
- Phrase reading instruction strategies lead to fluent sentence reading.
- Phrase reading problems often have their roots in oral language. Reading aloud to a student can provide a model of oral language and make it possible for the student to concentrate on voice cues and prosody.



Guidelines for Phrase-Cue Instruction

1. Use simple text that shows clear phrases.
2. Use:
 - text in a plastic sleeve with erasable marker, or
 - paper copy and pencil
3. Show the student how to mark the phrases with a slash.
4. Show the student how to make a scooping motion or line under the phrase.
5. Direct the student to read the selection using the marks made.



Module D

Instructor's Guide



Module D

Instructional Strategies for Connected Text Fluency



Goal 1: Describe the problems associated with the round-robin reading technique.



1.1 Lecture: A Word of Caution about Round-Robin Reading

Over the years in classrooms across the country teachers have used “round-robin” reading. This technique is generally characterized by having students sit in small reading groups around the teacher. Each student has the same text and is turned to the same page. The teacher directs one student to begin reading aloud, and then after a paragraph or two directs another student to continue reading the text aloud. In this way of teaching reading the students individually read parts of a new selection each day. Sometimes the selection contains new words, at other times it does not.

Reading researchers have found that this widespread mode of reading instruction is ineffective for producing fluent readers for a variety of reasons. For example, frequently, readers are not at the same place on the page at any one time. Many students who are not as fluent as others in their group are embarrassed and unwilling to read. The pace of instruction (Samuels, 1979) may be too fast for some and too slow for others. Some readers race ahead to find the text that they will be reading, reviewing it in hopes of being better prepared when it is their turn. The worst aspect of round-robin reading for fluency purposes is that students only read through the material once and, generally, only read a small portion of the entire text.

As we have emphasized throughout this Academy, having time to read material in its entirety, many times, is a much more effective means of developing fluency. However, in spite of research showing the lack of effectiveness of round-robin reading, it is still commonly used. As a result, paraeducators are often asked to read with students in this way. Suggest to class participants that if a teacher directs them to “read orally with students” but fails to specify how to do so, paraeducators mention that paired reading instruction has been shown effective at increasing prosody and reading fluency.



1.2 Discussion

At this point invite class members to share some of their personal memories of round-robin reading or to discuss current use of the technique. Many may feel that it is effective but should be encouraged to pursue other means of fluency intervention that have been proven to be far more effective and will be practiced in this module.



Goal 2: Demonstrate the use of paired reading.



2.1 Lecture: Strategy, Teacher-Student Assisted Reading and Paired Reading

Student-adult paired reading is a one-on-one activity involving a student and an adult or a fluent reader. It works because the fluent reader does two important things. First, he/she provides a model or demonstration of fluent reading. Second, he/she gives positive corrective feedback about word recognition, pronunciation and word meaning.

Remind class participants of the importance of using reading materials that are at an appropriate difficulty level for the individual student, and also review the importance of using real text and age-appropriate materials for older students who are still struggling as readers.



2.2 Discussion

Use the **A Focus on Fluency** handout (**H1**), referring participants to the sections on Teacher-Student Assisted Reading, and the variation on teacher-student assisted reading called Paired Reading. Ask class members to read through the section, discussing the commonalities and differences in teacher-student assisted reading and paired reading techniques.



2.3 Activity: Paired Reading

Participants practice a student-adult/paired reading instructional strategy with other class members.

Materials: **A Focus on Fluency** handout (**H1**)



2.3.1 Steps

- Divide the class into pairs for this activity.
- Distribute the **A Focus on Fluency** handout (**H1**) and ask the pairs to turn to find the bold-faced heading Paired Reading.
- Ask each pair to read the passage and discuss the directions provided within the passage.
- Direct each group to designate a fluent reader and a student reader and to use the directions within the passage to do a paired reading activity, using the passage itself as the text for the activity.
- Switch roles so each participant practices the paraeducator role in Paired Reading.



Goal 3: Demonstrate partner or buddy reading.



3.1 Lecture: Strategy, Partner or Buddy Reading

Several forms of partner or buddy reading have been found to be effective. The term “partner” or “buddy” is used because this technique usually includes students reading with students. In one form of the technique students who are better readers are paired with students who are less able. In another variation, the teacher reads aloud from a text with students following along. The teacher models fluent reading and using appropriate levels of prosody. The teacher then directs student pairs (one more fluent, one less fluent) to read the same text to each other, following the model the teacher provided. The fluent reader is expected to assist the less fluent peer. The less fluent reader has multiple opportunities to read the passage and persists until he can read the passage independently. This often takes three or four rereadings (Samuels, 2002).



3.2 Activity: Partner/Buddy Reading

Participants practice a partner/buddy reading instructional strategy with other class members.

Materials: A Focus on Fluency handout (H1)



3.2.1 Steps

- Divide the class into pairs. If participants have consistently been working with the same class member in a paired situation, ask them to pair up with somebody else this time. The change will provide a different perspective and increase each paraeducator’s instructional skills.
- Using **A Focus on Fluency (H1)**, direct the participants to turn to page 3.
- Ask each pair to take the time to read to themselves. They are to begin reading at the boldfaced section titled Partner (or Buddy) Reading and proceed through the section titled Conducting Partner Reading and A Student Feedback Technique.
- Ask each pair to review the section titled Partner Reading Procedure. They are to use the procedure as a guide for reading together as buddies for this activity.
- Ask the pair to designate one of them as the Group 1 reader and the other as the Group 2 reader.
- Direct the pairs to use the outlined procedure to read the next part of the text provided in the handout. Reading should begin with the paragraph that starts:
- “Some research has found that students work better in pairs when . . .” and should end with the final paragraph in this section. That paragraph begins with “Evidence indicates that repeated oral reading with guidance . . .”
- After the pairs have completed the partner/buddy reading activity, reconvene the class and discuss learnings and insights related to the activity.



3.3 Discussion: Variations on Assisted, Paired and Buddy Reading Using Technology

Review the **A Focus on Fluency** handout (**H1**), looking specifically at the section on tape-assisted and computer-assisted reading. Ask participants to read the two sections. Ask what their experience has been with computer-assisted fluency practice. Then discuss the possible roles for the paraeducator in creating tape recordings of student text for the use in tape-assisted fluency practice. Remind paraeducators about the importance of having students who have practiced with a tape account for their work by reading aloud to an adult following the practice session.



Goal 4: Demonstrate the use of choral reading for building fluency at the connected text level.



4.1 Lecture: Strategy: Choral Reading

The Put Reading First Initiative (The Partnership for Reading) describes choral reading as reading in unison. This is a reading opportunity for students to read along as a group with the teacher or another fluent reader. In using this strategy, the students must have access to and see the text the reader is using. With young children, the paraeducator may use a big book or provide each student with a copy of the material being used. To ensure the best results material must not be too long and must be at the independent reading level of most of the students.

Using patterned or predictable books can be especially effective because the repetitious style encourages students to join in. Thus, poetry is a good choice. To use this strategy, the paraeducator begins by reading the book aloud, modeling fluent reading. After reading the text one time, the paraeducator rereads the book and invites the students to join in as they recognize the words being read. The paraeducator continues rereading the book, encouraging students to join in as they are able. The students should read the book with the paraeducator three to five times, not necessarily on the same day. After that students should be able to read the text independently.

For pieces that are particularly engaging, the students might want to rehearse sufficiently to put on a choral reading performance to the entire class.



4.2 Activity: Choral Reading

Participants practice a choral reading instructional strategy with other class members.

Materials: Select a passage from some adult-level reading material for this activity. It should be something other than the handout used in the previous activity and different from the passages used in Module C of this Academy. A good choice would be a current best-selling novel or a classic piece of literature. Shakespeare might be appropriate, as would Walt Whitman. Also, the poetry of Langston Hughes, the well-known African-American poet, provides good material for adult reading. An Internet search will reveal



suitable material. The following site contains an excerpt from one of Hughes' poems:
<http://www.csustan.edu/english/reuben/pal/chap9/hughes.html>.

The passage could be as little as 200 words, or as long as 600. The important guidance here is to select something that is good literature rather than a magazine piece or pulp fiction.



4.2.1 Steps

- Describe how paraeducators might ask young students to sit on the floor at the front of the classroom, but how that would not be age-appropriate for older students.
- Older students could stand on the type of risers that a choir might use in rows in front of the room to mimic the way choir members would stand, or may be seated.
- Provide the passage to participants.
- Act as the paraeducator for this activity and have participants take the student role.
- Read the passage to the class using the process outlined in the lecture section of this activity.
 - ▲ read the passage aloud, asking the class to follow along in their handouts,
 - ▲ model fluent reading,
 - ▲ reread the text and invite students to join in as they recognize the words you are reading,
 - ▲ reread the selection multiple times, encouraging the students to read with you until everyone is able to participate.
- As a variation have participants pair up and read the selection to each other a few times; then reconvene the large group for a final choral reading.
- After completing the activity invite class members to share their thinking about the activity and how they could use it to help students.



Goal 5: Demonstrate the use of Readers Theater for building fluency at the connected text level.



5.1 Lecture: Strategy, Readers Theater

Refer to the section on Readers Theater in the **A Focus on Fluency** handout (H1). Readers theater is an activity that many students enjoy. Using this strategy, the students rehearse and perform a play for their peers and others. Scripts are rich in dialogue and language, encouraging experiential and cognitive growth. In most plays, students are assigned roles and speak lines. In addition, a narrator reads the sections between the lines of dialogue sharing necessary background information. A positive feature of Readers Theater is that it provides readers with a legitimate reason to reread text and to practice fluency. This strategy has been found to be effective in motivating some students who have reading difficulties (Put Reading First, The Partnership for Reading; Rinehart, 1999).

An additional source of information about Readers Theater may be found at <http://www.aaronshp.com>. This author's website gives many hints and ideas about Readers Theater (or RT as he calls it).



5.2 Activity: Readers Theater

Readers Theater is more appropriate for younger children – up to middle school age. Depending on the age levels of the students whom the participants work with, the instructor might choose to do this activity or to leave it out. If you decide to use the activity, we suggest that you find another reading passage rather than reusing one from a previous activity. It should not be very long – maybe 500 words or so. The passage needs to contain a substantial number of dialogue lines and at least two characters.



5.2.1 Steps

- Form groups of participants based on the number of speaking roles in the selected passage plus a narrator.
- Give each participant the entire passage and ask them to go through it, highlighting or underlining the dialogue lines that are said by the character they are portraying.
- Similarly, ask the narrator to highlight or underline the parts of the text that he or she will read.
- Have the group practice the section, each participant reading his or her lines.
- After sufficient rehearsal time, have each group perform for the others.



5.3 Discussion: Survey of Knowledge

Ask participants to locate the **Survey of Fluency Terms** handout (A-H3) used at the beginning of the Academy. Review the survey with attendees, discussing the knowledge and the techniques they have learned in this Academy.

5.4 Assignment



***Note to Instructor:** Prior to beginning the class, decide how to manage the assignment and the assessment. Issues to consider include:

1. Whether you want to use the assignments or assessments included in the Academy.
2. The requirements of the institution that is providing transcript credit.
3. How you will inform participants of test results.
4. Whether you will return the hard copy of the test to participants (knowing that tests may be shared and that you may not be able to use the same test again).
5. How and when you will make the assignment and when and how participants are to submit it to you.

Use the **Assignment** handout (H2) provided with this module. Review the requirements for the assignment with the class and make arrangements for students to turn in the assignment for grading. Allow no more than two weeks for completion. The assignment is a reflective response that can be used as one of the requirements for the practicum portion of the CO-TOP certificate. Encourage paraeducators to keep the assignment for later use.



5.5 Final Assessment

Paraeducators **may use their notes and handouts** to assist them in the Assisting with Fluency in the Classroom Academy assessment.

Use the **Final Exam, Assisting with Fluency in the Classroom** handout (**H3**). Use your own judgment about how much time to allow; **45 minutes** should be sufficient. After attendees have completed the assessment, ask them to complete the course evaluation and other instructor-provided information. Use the answers and grading rubric below to assist in grading the final exam.

5.5.1 Rubric for Grading Assisting with Fluency Academy

This rubric includes recommendations for grading:

1. Participation
2. Attendance
3. Assessment
4. Assignment
5. Final grade for academy

Grades are based upon a range of possible points earned:

Participation	Attendance	Assessment	Assignment	Total points possible
0-75	0-75	0-100	0-200	0-450
A	B	C	D	Failing
450-400	399-360	359-314	313-268	267 and below

Participation: Attendees can earn up to **75** points for class participation. Take into consideration the level of participation that occurs within smaller group settings as well as in larger groups.

Attendance: Attendees can earn up to **75** points for full attendance. Refer to class syllabus for information regarding absences.

5.6 Grading the Assignment

Grading is recorded and based upon an individual total of **250** possible points. Assign the following point value per answer when grading:

1. Spelling and punctuation:

A total of **50** points is possible for spelling and punctuation. Paraeducators are encouraged to use a word processing program to type their responses so that they have access to spell check and other word processing tools.



2. Thoughtful reflective responses:

Answers should reflect that the paraeducator spent time thinking about the content of his or her answer. Also grade the paraeducator's ability to comprehend and then relate his or her comprehension of the information gathered during the activities. Refer to the example of a well-written reflective response if needed for grading purposes. A total of **150** points is possible for this portion of the assignment.

5.7 Grading Reflective Responses

Each of the seven reflection prompts is assigned a maximum number of points. You will need to use your judgment to determine whether the participant has earned the full number of points or partial points for each item.

1. **Nature of the activity.** Tell about one of the activities you chose and why you chose it. Describe what students are supposed to learn from this activity. (10 points possible)
2. **Your procedure.** Describe how you prepared to use the technique and how you worked with the student(s). (20 points possible)
3. **Impact.** Tell how the activities impacted the student's learning. (20 points possible)
4. **Successes.** Tell about what was most successful. (30 points possible)
5. **Difficulties encountered.** Tell difficulties or problems you encountered. (20 points)
6. **Projected changes.** Describe how you might change how you use the technique in the future, with the same student or with another student. (20 points possible)
7. **Effects on my own learning.** Describe how using this technique with students has affected your own learning. (30 points possible)

Sample Personal Reflective Response

(The sample is provided to the participant as an example, and the participant is warned not to copy what is provided here. The sample may help the instructor notice typical kinds of responses. The following response received full points on every item.)

Nature of the Activity:

Academy: Instructional Strategies

The name of the activity/ lesson that I chose is "Levels of Support" from Goal ..., Objective ...



1. Nature of the activity:

Academy: Instructional Strategies

The name of the activity/lesson that I chose is “Levels of Support” from Module A, Goal 3. I chose to use an activity that I have been doing with a student all year. I have been helping that student get off the bus and get to his classroom every day. I have set up a plan with the teacher to fade my assistance until the student is able to do this independently.

Why I chose this activity:

I chose this activity because I noticed when taking the Academy that I had never thought about how to fade the levels of support that I had given to students. I thought that when I was assigned to a student I was expected to help that student do the activity and complete the lesson. I had never thought about the true goal of teaching the student, that the goal was for the student to become independent with the skill.

What students are supposed to learn:

To be more independent and to rely on me less.

2. Procedure:

First I spoke with my supervising (mentor) teacher about what I should do for an activity about levels of support. She looked through the material and suggested I look at something with Sonny because he is a new student who had always had a one-to-one paraeducator. We were trying to decrease some of that support because he would be going to middle school next year and we did not think he needed that much support.

Next I chose an activity that I thought would be important for Sonny to learn before going to middle school. I spoke with my supervising (mentor) teacher about decreasing how much I support Sonny getting off the bus and to class. She thought it was a good idea and created a data sheet to record the process. I asked her if I could make the data sheet because I wanted the experience. She said that would be great because it addressed one of the goals on Sonny’s IEP, and asked me to show it to her when I was done. We talked about what should be included on the data sheet and what the plan could be if Sonny wasn’t able to do this on his own, and how I should explain all of this to Sonny before we started doing it.

I explained to Sonny that he would need to start walking from the bus to class by himself. I told him that I would be in the area to make sure he was safe but that I would not walk right beside him. My plan was to start there and then to fade to less assistance and to finally just shadow him until I saw that he could do it by himself.

I used a spreadsheet on the computer to make the data sheet. I had to make several different ones until I made one that I thought covered all of the things



we had talked about. When I showed it to my supervising (mentor) teacher she said it looked great. I have included an empty copy of it in my portfolio, and a copy of one with data.

3. *Impact:*

It took only 3 weeks for Sonny to become completely independent getting off the bus and walking to class. At first he looked around for me when the bus stopped, and one time he was late for class because he got distracted at the water fountain. I saw that he was distracted and at first I thought I should tell him to go to class, but I didn't as that was not part of the plan that the teacher and I had written up. The teacher made him stay after class for 5 minutes to make up the time that he had missed. The best part was that he started walking to class with another student and it looks like they are becoming friends. Not only did Sonny learn to be more independent, he also made a new friend.

4. *Successes:*

I think several things contributed to the success of this activity. The data sheet helped to keep me on track of what we were expecting from Sonny and I didn't have to worry about whether I was doing the right thing. Talking with the teacher about what to do if he was late to class before it happened made it easier for me to watch and wait instead of helping. When I made the data sheet, I had to think carefully about all the steps we would need to take to help Sonny become independent. Having a plan made it so much easier.

5. *Difficulties encountered:*

One of the biggest problems I had with this activity was making the data sheet. I had used a computer before, but had never made a spreadsheet. It took several tries before I got one that I felt we could use.

6. *Projected changes:*

I don't know if I should make any changes in with I did with Sonny, but I have looked at how often I help Theresa at lunch. I think I will talk with the teacher about how I should fade some of the support I give her. She needs a lot more help with Sonny so I'm not sure where I should start.

7. *Effects on my own learning:*

I learned many things while completing this activity with Sonny. I learned some practical things like how to make a spreadsheet that covered all of the parts of the data that we would like to have. I also learned that it is hard to let students make mistakes, but if we don't let them make mistakes and then figure out how to correct those mistakes, they can't learn to be independent. Probably the most important thing that I have learned is to look at my "level of support" and to ask myself if that is helping a student learn to be independent, or am I helping too much. I am constantly analyzing where I can make decisions to fade my support to let kids increase their independence.



5.8 Grading the Final Exam

Answer Key

Grading is recorded and based upon an individual total of **100** possible points. Assign the following point value per answer when grading:

True and False: 15 points, 3 points per answer

1. True (3 points)
2. False (3 points)
3. False (3 points)
4. True (3 points)
5. True (3 points)

Multiple-Choice: 25 points, 5 points per answer

6. C (5 points)
7. B (5 points)
8. A (5 points)
9. D (5 points)
10. B (5 points)

Definitions/Short Answers:

11. Automaticity: 8 points, 2 points per answer:

Possible answers:

- reads with no noticeable cognitive or mental effort
- has mastered word recognition skills to the point of overlearning
- does not require conscious attention to the fundamental skills
- can simultaneously decode and comprehend a passage read or listened to
- paces reading rate depending on the text structure
- reads text orally using appropriate phrasing and expression

12. Prosody: 20 points, 5 point per answer:

Possible answers:

- reads with expression
- sounds as though naturally speaking
- uses intonation and correct phrasing
- uses punctuation for reading cues
- recognizes the way words are organized into sentences and passages
- uses stress and emphasis
- uses appropriate reading rate
- is pleasant to listen to



13. Scope and Sequence, Automaticity: 20 points, 4 points per answer

1. Sounds (4 points)
2. Letters (4 points)
3. Words (4 points)
4. Phrases (4 points)
5. Sentences (4 points)

14. Round-Robin Reading: 6 points, 3 points per answer

Possible answers:

- readers are not at the same place at the same time
- students who are not as fluent as others are embarrassed and unwilling to read
- pace of instruction (Samuels, 1979) may be too fast or too slow
- students may read ahead, hoping to find the text passage that they will be reading
- instruction that is not appropriately paced does not benefit fluency
- students only read through the material once
- students only read a small portion of the entire text
- students do not practice the material multiple times
- reading materials may not be at the instructional level for fluency

15. Name two techniques that can be used while reading with students to improve connected text fluency: 6 points, 3 points per answer

Possible answers:

- buddy or partner reading
- paired reading
- choral reading
- Readers Theater



Module D

Handouts



Adapted from
A Focus on Fluency

Research-Based Practices in
Early Reading Series

Pacific Resources for Education and Learning (PREL)

This handout contains material excerpted from *A Focus on Fluency* and is produced with permission of Pacific Resources for Education and Learning (PREL).

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Teacher-Student Assisted Reading. Assisted reading procedures take several forms. All forms, however, emphasize extensive practice as a means of improving students' fluency. In addition, most assisted reading methods start out by providing students with a model of fluent reading. By listening to good models of fluent reading, students learn how a reader's voice can help text make sense (Kuhn & Stahl, 2003).

In a typical assisted-reading intervention, the teacher provides the model of fluent reading while working one-on-one with a student. The teacher reads the text first as the student follows along. Then the student reads the same text to the teacher, who provides guidance with word recognition and expression, as well as encouragement. The student rereads the passage until the reading is fluent. This usually takes three or four rereadings.

Paired Reading. Paired reading (Topping, 1987) is a variation of assisted reading. In this procedure, a fluent reader – generally a parent or other adult – reads with a child who is having difficulty. Paired reading sessions begin with the adult reading a chosen passage to the child. Next, the two read the passage several times in unison. In some procedures, the child uses a prearranged signal when he or she wants to take over the reading and read alone. As the child reads, the adult may correct errors in word recognition by saying the word, having the child repeat the sentence in which the word appears, and then continuing to read. Paired readings have been shown to increase fluency both when used by tutors in the classroom (Rasinski et al., 1994) and by parents who have learned how to use the procedure in the home Morgan & Lyon (1979).

Readers Theater. In Readers Theater, students rehearse and perform a play for peers or others. They read from scripts that have been derived from books that are rich in dialogue. Students are assigned the roles of characters who speak lines or a narrator who shares necessary background information. Readers Theater provides readers with a legitimate reason to reread text and to practice fluency. Some research has shown that, as a result of the repeated readings necessary to prepare for Readers Theater, students make significant gains in fluency (Rasinski, 1999). Readers Theater has been found to be particularly effective in motivating students who have reading difficulties (Rinehart, 1999).

Tape-Assisted Reading (reading while listening). In tape-assisted reading, students read along in their books with an audiotaped fluent reader. In the basic form of the procedure (Chomsky, 1978), students listen to a taped selection that has been recorded by a fluent reader. For the first reading, students follow along in their own copy of the selection, pointing to each word as the reader says it. After listening to the entire selection, students choose one passage to practice. They then read aloud with the tape repeatedly until they gain fluency and can read the passage independently. The students then read the passage to the teacher. This last stage is very important because, for some students, listening to a tape can serve as time to engage in off-task behaviors. To be effective, tape-assisted reading must be monitored and students must be held responsible for what they hear and read.

One problem with assisted reading in the classroom is that it takes a great deal of time and requires that the teacher provide one-on-one support for each student. In a class of 20 students, few if any teachers can find even 5 minutes in a day to devote to reading with each student (Adams, 2002). Tape-assisted reading is one solution to this problem. Biemiller and Shany (1995) found that students who participated in sessions in which they followed along in their own books as they listened to a tape recording of a text performed as well on a measure of reading comprehension as did a group that received teacher-led



repeated reading practice. In addition, the tape-assisted reading group out-performed the teacher-led group on a measure of listening comprehension.

Computer-Assisted Reading. In recent years, a number of computer programs have been developed to provide students with repeated reading practice. In general, these programs use speech recognition software and immediate feedback as students read aloud a text presented on a computer screen. Computer-assisted reading has been found to be effective in improving fluency, word recognition, and comprehension in 1st- through 4th-grade students (Mostow et al., in press).

The software allows students to ask the computer to pronounce or to give the meaning of unfamiliar words. If the students ask for the meaning of a word, the computer presents the word's meaning in context, then gives a sentence and, wherever possible, a graphic to illustrate how it is used. Students can also request that the text, or any segment of it, be read aloud. As the students read, the computer keeps track of their fluency and accuracy, tracking performance over time (Adams, 2002).

Partner (or Buddy) Reading. In partner reading, paired students take turns reading aloud to each other. Various forms of partner reading have been found to produce significant gains in fluency (Eldredge, 1990; Koskinen & Blum, 1986). In a typical informal partner-reading procedure, students who are better readers are paired with students who are less able readers. The teacher first reads aloud a text (usually a story from the students' basal readers), pointing to words as they are read and modeling expressive reading. The fluent reader first reads a passage, following along in the book. Next, the pairs of students take turns reading a passage from the story to each other. The fluent reader first reads a passage, following the teacher's model. Then the struggling reader reads aloud the same passage, as his or her partner gives guidance with word recognition and provides feedback and encouragement. The struggling reader rereads the passage until it can be read independently, usually after four rereadings (Samuels, 2002).

Partner Selection Procedure:

1. The teacher uses fluency scores to rank order the class from top to bottom
2. The teacher splits the class into two groups of equal size:

Group 1 = top to middle
Group 2 = middle to bottom

3. The top reader of Group 1 is paired with the top reader of Group 2, and so on down the lists.

Partner Reading Procedure:

The Group 1 reader always reads first to set the pace and ensure accuracy.
The Group 2 reader reads and attempts to match the pace of his or her partner.
The teacher closely monitors reading fluency, moving around the room to listen to each set of partners.



Some research has found that students work better in pairs when they are allowed to choose their own partners (Stahl, Heubach, & Cramond, 1996). Allowing students to choose partners tends to result in fewer squabbles between partners and more time spent on task. In one informal procedure, students select both their partners and the passages they want to read. The first reader reads the passage two or three times. The partner provides support as needed with new words. After the final reading, the first reader notes improvements in a reading log. Then the partners switch roles and repeat the process (Koskinen & Blum, 1986). Using a compromise approach, the teacher initially assigns partners. When the students learn to work successfully as partners, the teacher allows them to pick their own partners as long as they stay on task and make progress.

In a more formal procedure for partner reading, cross-age tutoring (Labbo & Teale, 1990), an older student who is a struggling reader is paired with a younger student who is also having difficulty with reading. The older student practices reading a passage from the younger student's textbook until she can read it with accuracy and expression. When the partners meet, the older student reads aloud the passage, first alone and then with the younger student several times. Following this, the younger student reads the passage aloud as the older student offers support and guidance. Such procedures have been shown to produce fluency gains for both partners (Labbo & Teale, 1990; Rasinski, 2000).

A Student Feedback Technique:

In one kind of partner-reading procedure, students are trained by the teacher to use specific techniques for giving corrective feedback to each other:

Partner 1 (reading):

"Is that what you *brought* with your birthday money?" Jimmy's Mom asked.

Partner 2 (pointing to a word):

Stop. This word isn't *brought*, it's *bought*. *Brought, bought*. Hear the difference? Now, what's the word?

Partner 1:

It's *bought*.

Partner 2:

Good. Now read the sentence again.

Partner 1 (reading):

"Is that what you *bought* with your birthday money?" Jimmy's Mom asked.

It is important to note that all effective repeated-reading procedures include two features: (A) they provide students with many opportunities to practice reading, and (b) they provide students with guidance in how fluent readers read and with feedback to help them become aware of and correct their mistakes. This guidance and feedback may come from peers and parents, as well as teachers (Foorman & Mehta, 2002; Shanahan, 2002).

Evidence indicates that repeated oral reading with guidance and feedback helps to improve the reading ability of typically developing readers until at least 5th grade. It also helps struggling readers at higher grade levels (National Reading Panel, 2000).



Assignment: Assisting with Fluency in the Classroom

Part I:

The first part of the assignment for this class is to use two of the techniques you learned with one or more real students. Choose from:

- determining WCPM
- determining reading accuracy/word recognition
- determining student reading levels with various texts (independent, instructional, frustration)
- using a teacher feedback technique
- conducting a speed drill
- using phrase reading instruction
- using student-adult/paired reading
- partner/buddy reading
- choral reading
- Readers Theater

Part II:

The second part of the assignment is to write a description of only **one of the two** activities that you used with students.

Note: Reflection should take time. For example, after completing Responses 1 and 2, give yourself some reflective thinking time before responding to the next question. You are provided a sample reflection from another Academy that might be helpful to you.

Assignment: Reflective Responses

1. **Nature of the activity.** Tell about one of the activities you chose and why you chose it. Describe what students are supposed to learn from this activity. (10 points possible)
 2. **Your procedure.** Describe how you prepared to use the technique and how you worked with the student(s). (20 points possible)
 3. **Impact.** Tell how the activities impacted the student's learning. (20 points possible)
 4. **Successes.** Tell about what was most successful. (30 points possible)
 5. **Difficulties encountered.** Tell difficulties or problems you encountered. (20 points)
 6. **Projected changes.** Describe how you might change how you use the technique in the future, with the same student or with another student. (20 points possible)
 7. **Effects on my own learning.** Describe how using this technique with students has affected your own learning. (30 points possible)
-



How your assignment will be graded:

Grades are based on a total of 200 possible points in the following areas:

1. Spelling and punctuation:

A total of 50 points is possible for spelling and punctuation. You are encouraged to use a word processing program to type your responses so that you have access to spell check and other helpful word processing tools.

2. Thoughtful reflective responses:

Your answers should reflect that you spent time thinking about the content of your answer. Also, your answers should show your ability to apply the skills you learned. Use the sample provided as a guide for the quality of responses your instructor will be looking for. A total of 150 points is for this portion of the assignment.

Sample Personal Reflective Response

(Please note: This sample is provided so you can see how a paraeducator completed a reflective response for her assignment in another academy. Please do not write the same things. Your response should be unique to you and to the activity you chose and it should come from your heart.)

Academy: Instructional Strategies

The name of the activity / lesson that I chose is “Levels of Support” from Module A, Goal 3. I chose this activity because I noticed when taking the academy that I had never thought about how to fade the levels of support that I had given to students. I thought that when I was assigned to a student that I was expected to help that student do the activity and complete the lesson. I had never thought about the true goal of teaching the student, that the goal was for the student to become independent with the skill.

1. Nature of the activity:

Academy: Instructional Strategies

The name of the activity/lesson that I chose is “Levels of Support” from Module A, Goal 3. I chose to use an activity that I have been doing with a student all year. I have been helping that student get off the bus and get to his classroom every day. I have set up a plan with the teacher to fade my assistance until the student is able to do this independently.

Why I chose this activity:

I chose this activity because I noticed when taking the Academy that I had never thought about how to fade the levels of support that I had given to students. I thought that when I was assigned to a student I was expected to help that student do the activity and complete the lesson. I had never thought about the true goal of teaching the student, that the goal was for the student to become independent with the skill.

What students are supposed to learn:

To be more independent and to rely on me less.



2. **Procedure:**

First I spoke with my supervising (mentor) teacher about what I should do for an activity about levels of support. She looked through the material and suggested I look at something with Sonny because he is a new student who had always had a one-to-one paraeducator. We were trying to decrease some of that support because he would be going to middle school next year and

Next I chose an activity that I thought would be important for Sonny to learn before going to middle school. I spoke with my supervising (mentor) teacher about decreasing how much I support Sonny getting off the bus and to class. She thought it was a good idea and created a data sheet to record the process. I asked her if I could make the data sheet because I wanted the experience. She said that would be great because it addressed one of the goals on Sonny's IEP, and asked me to show it to her when I was done. We talked about what should be included on the data sheet and what the plan could be if Sonny wasn't able to do this on his own, and how I should explain all of this to Sonny before we started doing it.

I explained to Sonny that he would need to start walking from the bus to class by himself. I told him that I would be in the area to make sure he was safe but that I would not walk right beside him. My plan was to start there and then to fade to less assistance and to finally just shadow him until I saw that he could do it by himself.

I used a spreadsheet on the computer to make the data sheet. I had to make several different ones until I made one that I thought covered all of the things we had talked about. When I showed it to my supervising teacher she said it looked great.

3. **Impact:**

It took only 3 weeks for Sonny to become completely independent getting off the bus and walking to class. At first he looked around for me when the bus stopped, and one time he was late for class because he got distracted at the water fountain. I saw that he was distracted and at first I thought I should tell him to go to class, but that was not part of the plan that the teacher and I had written up. The teacher made him stay after class for 5 minutes to make up the time that he had missed. The best part was that he started walking to class with another student and it looks like they are becoming friends. Not only did Sonny learn to be more independent, he also made a new friend.

4. **Contributions:**

I think several things contributed to the success of this activity. The data sheet helped to keep me on track of what we were expecting from Sonny and I didn't have to worry about whether I was doing the right thing. Talking with the teacher about what to do if he was late to class before it happened made it easier for me to watch and wait instead of helping. When I made the data sheet, I had to think carefully about all the steps we would need to take to help Sonny become independent. Having a plan made it so much easier.

5. **Difficulties encountered:**

One of the biggest problems I had with this activity was making the data sheet. I had used a computer before, but had never made a spreadsheet. It took several tries before I got one that I felt we could use.



6. *Changes/modifications/use with other students:*

I don't know if I should make any changes in what I did with Sonny, but I have looked at how often I help Theresa at lunch. I think I will talk with the teacher about how I should fade some of the support I give her. She needs a lot more help with Sonny so I'm not sure where I should start.

7. *Effects on my own learning:*

I learned many things while completing this activity with Sonny. I learned some practical things like how to make a spreadsheet that covered all of the parts of the data that we would like to have. I also learned that it is hard to let students make mistakes, but if we don't let them make mistakes and then figure out how to correct those mistakes, they can't learn to be independent. Probably the most important thing that I have learned is to look at my "level of support" and to ask myself if that is helping a student learn to be independent, or am I helping too much. I am constantly analyzing where I can make decisions to fade my support to let kids increase their independence.



(Name)

(Date)

Final Exam
Assisting with Fluency in the Classroom

Using your notes and handouts from the Assisting with Fluency in the Classroom Academy, complete the following assessment.

True or False: Circle the answer that best reflects the accuracy of the following statements:

- True False 1.** WCPM stands for the number of words a student reads correctly per minute; it is used to determine a student's fluency score to interpret student writing.
- True False 2.** Instructional level is the level at which a student reads with no more than one error in 20 words.
- True False 3.** Accuracy is the speed at which text is read.
- True False 4.** Grade-level texts are texts that have been evaluated to establish text difficulty and grade appropriateness.
- True False 5.** Fluency is the ability to read words quickly with accuracy and expression.

Multiple-Choice: Write the letter that best fits the definition on the space provided.

- 6.** The ability to recognize words when concepts have been taught: _____
- a. rate
 - b. fluency
 - c. word recognition
 - d. decoding
- 7.** A phenomenon noted in reading describing how "the rich get richer and the poor get poorer:"
- _____
- a. a lack of reading fluency
 - b. the Matthew Effect
 - c. scientifically based reading research
 - d. the stages of reading development



8. When we do something without conscious attention: _____
 - a. automaticity
 - b. prosody
 - c. rote reading
 - d. none of the above
9. The part of our brain where we store short-term information: _____
 - a. long-term memory
 - b. brain stem
 - c. tabula rasa
 - d. working memory
10. The bridge to comprehension: _____
 - a. reading
 - b. fluency
 - c. automaticity
 - d. WCPM

Definitions/Short Answers:

Write a short answer or definition to the following items:

- 11. List four defining factors that demonstrate that a student can read with automaticity. If students read with automaticity, they are able to:**

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____

- 12. Describe four of the many features of the term “prosody” related to reading aloud:**

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____



13. The scope and sequence of reading fluency begins with automaticity in each of these five areas:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

14. Give two reasons why round-robin reading techniques do not work very well to improve fluency.

1. _____
2. _____

15. Name two techniques that can be used while reading with students to improve connected text fluency.

1. _____
2. _____



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